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Edited by  
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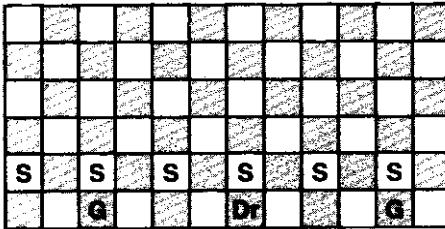
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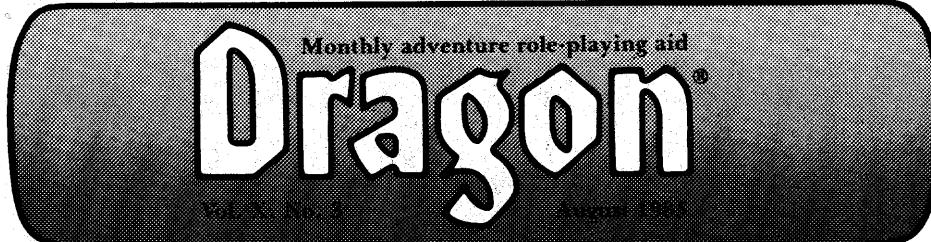
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2 AUGUST 1985



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## COVER

It's fitting that an issue filled with things we've never done before should start off with a cover that's unlike any of the ninety-nine that preceded it. The artwork is actually a paper sculpture created by TSR's Dennis Kauth, who built up shapes and surfaces from a flat background to produce this scene of a faerie dragon serenely gliding along the edge of a stream, while the sword and the small pile of coins suggest that some other creature had come this way before. The sculpture was turned into a photograph after being illuminated to bring out the three-dimensional aspects of the piece, and for an extra touch we tossed in some color on the dragon and the "Dragon" and had the colored part of the cover embossed. Why purple? Because a purple faerie dragon is the oldest and most powerful of its kind. And the faerie dragon itself is symbolic of DRAGON Magazine's contributions to the AD&D game; the description of the creature, originally written by Brian Jaeger, appeared in issue #62 and was later picked up for inclusion in *Monster Manual II*.

# Letters

*Well, not really. This month, the Letters column should more properly be called "Answers." We decided to spend some space in issue #100 to deal with some questions that get asked a lot (or that we suspect get asked a lot), but which don't fit well into the format of our regular Letters column.*

*Two qualifications before we start: First, you should understand that a lot of statements in these answers are expressed in absolute terms for the sake of brevity, and we don't necessarily mean them to be taken entirely at face value. In other words, assume the word "usually" in front of every verb. Second, the statements and opinions expressed here are the sole responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief and do not necessarily represent the opinions of TSR, Inc., my boss, or anybody else who isn't me. And now, the first envelope . . .*

## Why didn't you answer the letter I wrote?

Our reasons for not answering a letter are just about as numerous as your reasons for writing one. The major causes boil down to these:

— You asked us about something we aren't qualified to talk about, such as a game or other product put out by TSR, Inc. For instance, this is not the place to direct questions or observations about *The Book of Marvelous Magic*, or about a TSR module for the AD&D® or D&D® game. We can't help anyone with questions like "Where can I get a copy of issue #13?" or "How much is my copy of issue #2 worth?" or with other similar questions pertaining to out-of-print back issues. We don't hand out information on other departments and sections of TSR, Inc.; if you want to submit your novel, write to the book department, and if you want to solicit an assignment to illustrate a module, then contact the people in the art department. This category covers a lot more ground than these examples indicate — please understand that our sphere of knowledge is relatively limited. We can't take the time to dig up answers that we can't quickly provide, and we won't speculate about things we don't know about.

— You asked a question that has also been asked by several other people, and for which we intend to publish an answer in the magazine. The best recent example of this is the avalanche of letters we got pertaining to the druid/ranger alignment problem; Frank Mentzer has answered all of those letters in one fell swoop in the article that begins on page 9 of this issue.

— You didn't enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your letter. We do respond to some letters that come in without SASEs, and we don't always answer letters that do have SASEs. In general, the content of your letter will be the major factor in determining whether it gets answered, but your chances of hearing back from us are better if you send an SASE.

## Why did it take so long to get an answer?

Nobody has actually *asked* this question, but I'll bet that most of the people who've written to us have *thought* it. The stock answer, of course, is "We're busy" — but who isn't? I figured that a short description of our work schedule would help

everyone who has received an answer understand why it was so long in coming, and it will serve as fair warning for anyone who might write in the months to come.

Our schedule runs on a cycle that repeats itself about every four weeks, and we keep track of time in a backward fashion. The day after we send an issue off to the printer is not "deadline plus 1," it's "deadline minus 29." For Roger Moore and me, at least two weeks out of every four are spent in production — that is, doing things that contribute directly to making the next deadline. During that production time, we have little if any opportunity to dig into manuscripts, art submissions, and other correspondence. (In addition to what he does for this magazine, Pat Price also has to contend with getting an issue of AMAZING® Science Fiction Stories out the door every 60 days. I won't even try to explain what his schedule is like.)

So, what that leaves us with is two weeks — at most — out of every month to deal with four weeks' worth of articles, letters, and art samples. Obviously, it's a losing battle. I consider myself caught up if I can get to the point where I'm answering letters that arrived three weeks previously, and I don't get caught up very often.

Manuscript evaluation lags even farther behind than regular correspondence, because it often takes almost as much time for us to evaluate an article submission as it took the author to write it. If you get an answer back on your submission within six weeks from the time you sent it to us, then you must have hit us at a good time. Or else your submission was very good . . . or very bad.

## How do you handle a manuscript submission?

Article submissions go to Roger Moore's desk first. He weeds out the ones that are obviously unacceptable or inappropriate, and then forwards the potentially good ones to me. This group includes manuscripts that he thinks are good enough to print as is, plus some other pieces that he thinks might pass muster if they're revised to some extent. Then I read them and pass my recommendations back to Roger, and in most cases he takes care of corresponding with the authors to give them the good or bad news.

It's essentially a simple process, but on a one-by-one basis, decisions about particular manuscripts are often very complex. If we don't accept or reject something outright, we'll ask the author to revise his submission and will usually give a fair amount of specific advice on how we think it could be expanded, shortened, or improved — but without making any promise that the revised manuscript will automatically be accepted.

Fiction manuscripts start their journey at Pat Price's desk. He reads them and shows the good ones to me and, on occasion, Roger, too. The process is pretty much the same as for article manuscripts, except that we hardly ever ask for revisions to a fiction submission: If it isn't right for us exactly as written, we send it back, perhaps with a suggestion to show it to other publishers.

## How do you handle an art submission?

At least ninety percent of the art submissions

# Memories are made of this

Issue Number One Hundred has more significance for me than you might expect. And if you'll allow me a little random reminiscing, I'll try to explain why that's so.

On the day this magazine starts rolling off the press, it will have been exactly six years since I sheepishly walked in the door at TSR Periodicals.

When I first laid eyes on Tim Kask, the editor of what was then known as The Dragon, I had to fight back the impulse to run the other way — not because Tim was ferocious, but because I was scared stiff.

Even though I had worked as an editor for more than nine years, I had no reason to suppose that my credentials would impress a guy who didn't know me from a hole in the ground. I thought I knew a little bit about this game called D&D (which had not yet earned its circle-R) — but all too soon I found out just how little I *did* know.

I took a deep breath and started my speech. "I've got some experience as an editor, and I was wondering if you guys could use some help." Not exactly a hard sell, but . . .

Tim listened, and talked, and talked some more. He ended up deciding that, sure, there were probably some things I could help with, and I might be able to pick up some money by working as what he called "casual labor."

As a test of what I could or couldn't do, he dug out a few manuscripts and gave them to me to take home over the weekend. I worked on them in anything but a casual fashion, peppering them with red marks to show how I thought they ought to read.

Less than a week later, it looked like I had proved myself — judging by the fact that Tim was giving me more to do and I was wearing out red pens almost as fast as I could take off the caps.

Less than a month later, I attended my first convention — an experience that is still so clear in my mind that it could have happened yesterday. If that was my final exam, then I must have passed, because by the middle of September 1979 I stopped being casual labor and started being an official employee of TSR Hobbies, Inc.

The days flowed into weeks, the weeks into issues. (In this business, the principal measurement of time is the issue; when you start work in June on something that doesn't really exist until August, the word "month" doesn't really apply.) And the issue numbers began to mount up.

Overtime was a way of life. Eating was something I did with my left hand,

while I sat at the typewriter and pecked out letters to writers with my right hand. (When you type like I do, using one hand doesn't slow you down that much.) Sleeping was something I did necessarily, but reluctantly. I loved every minute of my new job, even after it wasn't so new any more.

Putting together each issue was like embarking on a new and exciting adventure. We tried to make each one better than the last, and we succeeded more often than not.

As an indication of how far we've come, I can recall sitting in a meeting in early 1980 when one of TSR's management team predicted, with a straight face, that we'd be selling 50,000 copies per issue within a year from that time. "No way," I thought — and it's a good thing I kept my thought to myself. That prediction came true, not quite within a year, but soon enough so that even we who were in the middle of it all were amazed.

Many issues went by, and a lot of people came and went, before anyone started to think about Number One Hundred as anything more than the most abstract of concepts. Then, at some undefinable point, One Hundred became a destination we could faintly make out on the horizon.

Even as recently as a year ago, it hadn't really sunk in that we were eventually going to Get There. And it wasn't until after #99 was kicked out of the nest that the reality rose up and nailed me between the eyes.

Letting this issue go off to the printer is satisfying and scary at the same time — satisfying, for reasons that I hope will be obvious to you when you read what we've put in it, and scary because I can't keep from thinking that it could have and should have been better.

After all is said and done — which is just about to happen — the final determination is up to you. Was it worth waiting for? Will it be a tough act to follow? And on that note, I guess it's time to get busy on One Oh One.



we receive come to my desk initially, and most of them go back out in the mail without being seen by anyone else.

Like most publishers, we get a lot more solicitations from artists than we could ever hope to take advantage of. Unlike most publishers I know of, we get approached by quite a few people who are starting out along the road that they hope will lead to a career in illustration. One of the most unpleasant aspects of my job is being the bearer of bad tidings to the vast majority of the artists who show us samples of their work (just as I'm sure Roger doesn't enjoy sending rejection letters to writers).

Practically all of the people who get their artwork published in the magazine nowadays are artists with a few years of professional experience. We're not prejudiced in favor of established professionals, but when we have a choice between working with someone who's starting out and someone who has already traveled down the road, well . . . what would you choose?

When we run across a submission from someone whose style and technical expertise compare favorably with what we've been publishing, we send back a more-or-less positive response that says, in so many words, we like your stuff and there's a possibility that we'll get back to you in the future with a proposal for an assignment to illustrate an article or a short story. (Virtually all of the interior artwork we use is done on assignment; we don't usually try to make "off-the-rack" illustrations work — because they hardly ever do.)

Sometimes we decline an artist's solicitation even if the style and technique displayed in the samples are of professional quality, because that style and technique just aren't appropriate for us. And all too often we are forced to send back samples submitted by someone who obviously (in our estimation) hasn't been working at the craft long enough to develop and mature. We try to be encouraging, without sugar-coating our criticism, and we hope that everyone who receives a turn-down takes it in the same spirit it was given.

#### **Are the articles in the magazine just as "good" as the rules in the books?**

Yes . . . and no. The key word in this question is in quotation marks because it has at least two different meanings that can be applied here. The articles we accept and publish are just as well thought out, just as logical and sensible, and just as usable within the context of a game or campaign as the rules of the game itself — so, yes, they are just as "good" as the rules.

But, at the same time, they aren't actual additions to the rules. You, as the DM, can incorporate the ideas or the substance of a DM-oriented article into the game that you run for your friends. You, as a player, can (with the prior knowledge and consent of your DM) use an article directed primarily at players to make your character, or your playing technique, different in

some way from what the rules of the game provide for. But in neither case are you actually changing the rules of the game you play — and, in this respect, the suggestions and guidelines offered in an article are not as "good" as the rules that the article was inspired by or derived from.

Let's use the MONOPOLY® game for an analogy. The rules of that game dictate that the "Free Parking" space is just that — a place where nothing good or bad happens to you. Yet some people like to throw a lot of the bank's proceeds into a pot that is picked up by the next player who lands on "Free Parking." (Maybe the space should then be called "Free Lunch.") If a group of players uses this variant rule, you certainly can't (and shouldn't try to) tell them that they aren't playing a MONOPOLY game. But if they enter a sanctioned MONOPOLY competition, they'll find out that there's no such thing as a Free Lunch (unless the regulations of the competition, for some reason, specify otherwise). That doesn't mean that the Free Lunch variant is "bad" — but it's not a rule, and not everyone is obliged to play that way.

So it is with a magazine article that suggests a way to "improve" the game you play. If you like it, use it. (That is, after all, what we're here for.) If you don't, turn the page. In either case, the rules of the game you play haven't changed.

#### **Why don't you make posters of your cover art?**

When we pay an artist for the privilege of reproducing a painting on the cover, all we purchase is the right to use that painting one time, for one specific purpose. Sure, we could draw up a contract that allowed for the possibility that we would want to make a poster of the painting at a later date, and if so, we would make a second payment to the artist.

Sounds easy — and it wouldn't be much more difficult than it sounds. However, we aren't in the poster business. (I was going to try not to answer any of these questions with "That's the way it is," but . . . that *is* the way it is.) The reasons why we aren't have a lot to do with the workings of big business (which is another thing I promised myself I wouldn't talk about). Many of the stores that sell the magazine don't carry posters, so we'd have to develop a different distribution network for them. And even if we had enough poster outlets rounded up, we would have no way of knowing ahead of time which, and how many, paintings to make into posters. A lot of people might like a painting that appears on the cover of a \$3.00 magazine, but how many of them would like to spend another few bucks to put an oversized reproduction of the same artwork on their wall? (If anyone out there can guarantee a pleasant answer to that question, I'm sure our marketing department would like to see your resume.)

Simply put, we don't do it because we aren't  
*(Turn to page 105)*

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Illustration  
by Lisa A. Free

To play the *Pendragon* roleplaying game, you create and take on the role of squire, knight, or noble of the realm. Armed and armored, you overcome life-and-death struggles, impossible frustration, and ruthless enemies to join the Fellowship of the Round Table.

The gamemaster leads the other players in interpreting the *Pendragon* rules and is central in bringing the adventures to life. He commands the magic of Merlin and Morgan le Fay, the actions of King Arthur and Queen Guenever, and the plotting of Mordred and Agravaine.

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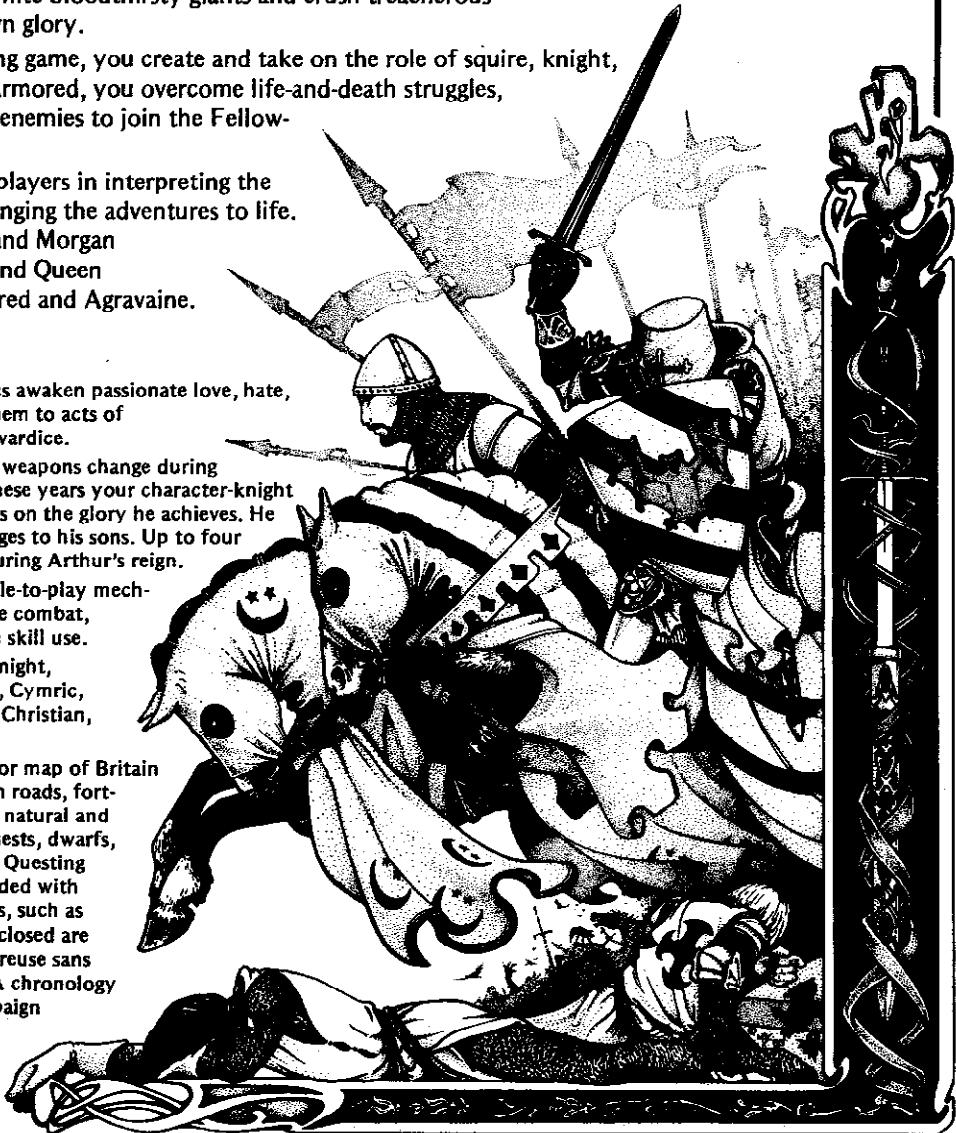
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## The Game of Quest, Romance, & Adventure

# Score one for *Sabratact*

## New sport combines targets with teamwork by Forest Baker

### INTRODUCTION

by Gary Gygax

*Some of you might know that I came into role-playing games through chess, more mundane games, and war-gaming — of both the mapboard and tabletop/minature figures varieties. I first met Forest Baker because he was a gamer of the sort who wished to take military simulations and enlarge and abstract them so as to get something with the precision of chess combined with the flexibility offered by both board wargaming and military miniatures. I was the fantasy buff and crazed individual fighting with rattan swords against "armored" members of the Society for Creative Anachronism, while Forest was a studious game developer and historical buff.*

*But now . . . gadzooks! The varlet has turned the tables on me! After removing from the Lake Geneva area, the Goodly Sir Baker has developed a most profound method for combining exercise, play history military, and Ye Grand Tourney (if you will) into what he dubs "sport."*

*SCA members, players of The Survival Game, and just about everyone else interested in exciting outdoors activity with "life & death" adventure elements should enjoy this new sport, Sabratact. I have been fascinated with the whole project from the start — but Forest, Sly Chap that he is, wouldn't breathe a word of what it was all about until just before he sent me the following. . . .*

*Read on!*

A new sport is being played in southern Connecticut. No longer will it be said that a team sport is attractive because it "mimics" the battlefield. *Sabratact*, the name of this new sport, is the battlefield!

*Sabratact*, in a very real sense, looks, plays, and feels like battle. The sport is played outdoors on a very large field, rather like a golf-course setting but without so much grooming. The teams can be quite large; *Sabratact* is designed for hundreds of players, although smaller teams are certainly more often the case. *Sabratact*, as we shall see, is not an individual sport.

Each warrior steps onto the *Sabratact* battlefield equipped with:

- A helmet in any number of styles, and which is protective in the same manner as a fencing mask. Two targets are carried on the helmet.
- A heart target attached to a chest-protection piece of armor.

- Three torso targets attached to the chest armor.
- Four torso targets attached to the back armor.
- Four limb targets attached to the outside surfaces of protective armor worn on the upper arms and the thighs.
- A shield which is strapped to the forearm or carried in the hand.
- One of several types of weapons. The weapons range from the classic (fencing) sword design through certain hand-delivered missiles. The weapon is designed to effectively break the target surface, but to be very safe for the participants.

The targets are three-inch-diameter stainless steel cups. These are bolted to the armor through the use of brass grommets. The open end of the cup is covered by the target surface. When the weapon breaks or penetrates this surface material, points are scored.

### Scoring system

	Points per target				Total possible
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Heart	10				10
Head	3	7			10
Chest	2	3	5		10
Back	1	2	3	4	10
Limbs	1	2	3	4	10

### Bonus points:

- 10 for breaking all targets
- 10 per warrior captured
- 10 per warrior for achieving tactical goal
- 10 per warrior freed from capture
- 20 per warrior on defending team for achieving strategic goal

### Penalty points:

- 100 per warrior involved in committing infraction

If the heart target is broken, the warrior must stop playing and leave the battlefield immediately. No further points can be scored against this warrior.

If a warrior is captured and surrenders, no further points can be scored by or against this warrior. The captive is escorted to the Field Prison by a member of the capturing team. Any "unscored points" (unbroken targets) remaining on the captive are counted by the capturing team if the warrior is not rescued before the end of the battle.

Any foul called by a Sabratact Field Judge will result in the immediate exit from the battlefield of the warrior(s) involved. Penalty Points are awarded to the victimized team in all cases of rule violations. (A full set of Official Sabratact International Rules and Regulations will be provided on request by Sabratact International.)



*Before the battle, the opponents-to-be help each other get safely outfitted. . . .*

The armor being used in southern Connecticut is made of leather, mostly in a traditional Greco-Roman design. However, certain pieces of armor look Japanese, and the helmet designs range from Mediterranean to Japanese and African images. Sabratact International has designed armor incorporating metal surfaces and some with high-tech plastics, but leather has proved to be very functional and attractive as well. A lacrosse or hockey glove is normally worn with a leather gauntlet on the forearm of the weapon hand.

The shields in use are wood framed and covered with either painted canvas or leather. The designs of the shields are traditional Oriental, European, and African variations. Weapons are constructed of extruded and machined plastics.

Because Sabratact battles are held in an open battleground setting, the visual images created are dramatic. Banners and military musicians (especially drummers and buglers) serve to heighten the pageantry. The flow of battle is quite orderly. Battle lines are tight and disciplined. Light infantry (skirmishers) and heavy infantry accompany and support the main body of warriors. There is no "full contact" aspect to Sabratact. Warriors stay at weapon's length apart; to close inside this distance makes the weaponry ineffective.

The objectives of an infantry battle are threefold:

- 1) The defeat of individual members of the opposition. This may be accomplished by imposing injury (breaking targets), elimination (breaking the heart target, or capture).
- 2) Holding the field. Positions may be established and held. These afford "jumping-off points" from which the strategic objective of the battle may be more easily reached. This constitutes the holding of ground for tactical purposes. If these positions are captured by the opposition (and a stationary, rigidly mounted target is broken),

points are awarded to the capturing side. If the opposition has taken prisoners, the location of the "field prison" may be captured (and a target marking the prison broken) so that the prisoners are returned and their points recovered with bonus points awarded.

- 3) Attaining an objective on the opposite side of the battleground. A single target is rigidly mounted. If the opposition's target is broken, points are awarded.

Depending on the size of the battlefield and the size of the battle units, Sabratact is divided into a number of periods extending some minutes each. The actual number of periods is quite variable, and the duration of each period varies both between matches and within a single match. For example, a battle may be calculated on a certain course to be six periods in length with the first two periods lasting three minutes each, the third and fourth periods being six minutes and two minutes, and the final two periods lasting eight minutes and four minutes. If the battle units are larger or smaller, then the length of the battle, duration of the periods, and size of the field would be altered accordingly. Each facility will have a unique set of battlefields and formulas.

At the beginning of each period, warriors enter the field from opposite borders, move forward into positions, and engage. As the battle proceeds, specific positions are established and held, allowing some warriors to start the following periods from these forward points rather than from the edge of the battleground.

As play continues, individual warriors may be heavily scored against, individuals may be eliminated, positions may be captured, the Strategic Goal may or may not be achieved, and warriors may be captured and perhaps rescued. At the end of the last period, scoring is tallied and the winning team is declared.

Sabratact International is manufacturing

equipment and putting it into the hands of the first Sabratact warriors. As the volume expands, manufacturers will be given orders for armor, weapons, and shields. At this time, Sabratact International is distributing directly to Sabratact clubs. As volumes rise, retailers will be allowed to carry approved designs. Sabratact battles are being fought on public athletic fields. As battle units grow, formal facilities will be franchised and made available for contests. Record-keeping is being performed on an automated database. Each warrior's permanent record is maintained by Sabratact International.

Sabratact International will retain very rigid control of equipment design. Manufacturing must always be of the highest quality, for safety reasons. Franchised retailers of Sabratact equipment will not be allowed to offer "uncontrolled" or unapproved equipment. Sabratact Battlefield Judges will conduct pre-battle formal inspection reviews. Only approved designs will be allowed on the battleground. Uncontrolled weapons, armor, or shields could present some risk of injury.

Sabratact battlefield facilities will provide well-trained Field Judges at a very heavy ratio to warriors. Sabratact rules and regulations will be strictly applied at all times.

Men and women of all skill levels and physical conditions now compete comfortable in the same contests, together. Age and size are not important factors. The combatant adopts a warrior identity and frame of mind as a result of the images created; the experience of battle is very real and exciting. This creates a healthy sense of the classical battleground.

Sabratact is something of a departure in team sports. Whereas most sports concentrate heavily on individual skills, such as "ball handling," teamwork is only a desirable element of success in those sports. In contrast, Sabratact is heavily dependent on cooperation between warriors and individual discipline. No matter how skilled any warrior might be, that ability must be



*. . . And then they take to the fields, swords and shields flailing!*



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blended into the fabric of the fighting unit. Every member of the battle unit must be disciplined to respond instantly to the direction of the field officer.

The challenge of the field commander's task is dramatically more demanding than that of, for example, a football quarterback. Primarily, the dynamic nature of Sabratact is very much more complex when compared to the "focused on the ball" nature of most team sports. Further, the time involved in developing and implementing each "play" on the Sabratact battlefield calls for confident, steady control. The most skilled group of warriors, if they are not disciplined to the field officer's command, is but a "rabble" no matter how correct that command might be. This rabble can be easily defeated by a battle unit composed of less skilled warriors but led in a disciplined manner. Discipline has always been the first rule of the battlefield. Individual performance, in Sabratact, must be in the context of the fighting unit, and utterly subject to the direction of the field commander.

Battle units are organized under field commanders of increasing rank, as the size of the battle unit increases. Individual warriors may qualify to declare themselves as field officers, and gather to themselves battle units under their personal command. These battle units may fight as Sabratact Independents, or may be attached to higher-ranking field commanders in large-scale Sabratact battles.

Battle unit	Ranking officer	Number of warriors
Individual	Warrior	1
Squad	Samurai	4
Platoon	Lieutenant	16
Company	Centurion	100
Regiment	Commander	300
Brigade	Colonel	1,000
Legion	General	4,000
Army	Field Marshal	12,000
Nation	Crown Prince	50,000
Empire	Emperor	250,000

The numbers given above are approximate. "Long" and "short" battle units will be allowed within certain constraints outlined in the Official Sabratact International Rules and Regulations. It will be several years before we see conflicts between battle units of the larger scales (Nations and Empires).

### Getting started

How does one become involved? The first step is to acquire weapons, armor, and a shield. Sabratact International is distributing these items directly. (A price list can be obtained by contacting Sabratact International.) Individuals should register themselves with Sabratact International, and upon doing so will receive information regarding clubs and activities.

A good next step would be to organize yourselves into squads. Sabratact International will register these battle units and the identity of the Samurai of your choosing. Field Officers (starting with the rank of Lieutenant) must be qualified by Sabratact International. Any individual Warrior or Samurai will be eligible for appointment as a Junior Officer, according to the guidelines contained in the Official Sabratact International Rules and Regulations. At this point, individual officers will gather their battle units of squads, platoons, and companies in order to engage their opponents.

Sabratact International will provide detailed Battle Report forms with which to register the results of your contests. These reports will go into your permanent records and become, in part, the basis for an officer's eligibility for promotion.

It is an officer's responsibility to gather and maintain the force of warriors who will fight under that officer's banner. No Samurai will be obligated to fight for any particular officer. An officer will maintain a following only through battlefield success and personal leadership.

Any individual may fight at any level of rank already achieved, or at any rank below that one, without constraint. Any warrior may aspire and work toward the highest Sabratact ranks.

### For more information . . .

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# All about the druid/ranger

## A classy explanation, better late than never

by Frank Mentzer

### *Editor's introduction*

"Both elven and half-elven characters can be druid/rangers, or can be triple-classed as druid/ranger/magic-users."

*Little did we realize the uproar that would follow the publication of that single sentence in issue #96, near the end of Gary Gygax's article on "New jobs for demi-humans." As scores of people have pointed out to us since then, the job of druid/ranger is impossible to qualify for under the existing AD&D® game rules.*

*It quickly became obvious that an explanation was in order even if it had to be after the fact. This Eager-to-Please Editor imposed upon Frank Mentzer to prepare an essay that would describe how and why this "illegal" class combination could — and should — be possible. Frank was more than happy to comply, and Gary also gave this piece of writing his stamp of approval — tacking on the final paragraph which appears here and leaving the remainder vir-*

*tually unchanged. So here, without further delay is the rest of the story*

Though the druid/ranger is permitted in the AD&D® game rules, an alignment conflict is obviously present. But the combination is equally obviously logical; both classes are woodland-oriented. Then again, why should high-level rangers gain druid spells, even when their alignments are radically different from those of the deities who grant such spells?

First, allow this multi-class combination only for characters of the Neutral Good alignment. For a rationale, consider the behavior and philosophy of each class in the context of the campaign.

Druuids, on the whole, minimize their association with "civilization," usually shunning the settlements of humans and humanoids for their beloved wilderness. To the truly Neutral druid, "each thing exists as a part of the whole, one as a check or

balance to the other, with life necessary for death, happiness for suffering, good for evil, order for chaos, and vice versa." (See *DMG*, page 23.) The druid lovingly tends the balance of all things, epitomized by Nature herself, while accepting the undeniable fact that Nature is sometimes cruel — survival of the fittest, and all that.

The actions and beliefs of a druid in the game are "good" — not in the alignment sense, but in the common meaning of "beneficial." Strictly within the druid's milieu, the druid considers his or her actions as "good" (more precisely, "best") for all things everywhere.

A ranger, on the other hand, is required to have a Good moral alignment: "Each creature is entitled to life, relative freedom, and the prospect of happiness. Cruelty and suffering are undesirable." (Again see *DMG*, page 23.) This moral perspective of the ranger, who deals with "civilized" areas much more often than the druid, is closely

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tied to relationships, and to the welfare of other beings. In relation to Nature herself, the ranger's outlook is very neutral-oriented. The balance of Nature is a "good" thing (lower-case "g," as opposed to "Good" alignment). The primary divergence between the ranger and druid philosophies is in their attitude toward suffering individuals: The ranger will always try to help, while the druid might look on, believing that even suffering has its place and purpose.

The Neutral Good ranger may thus be considered nearly true Neutral when functioning in the realm of Nature. Player-character druid/rangers are thus permitted, if of that alignment. Druids and Neutral Good rangers can be quite friendly toward one another — the druid considering the ranger as a "soul nearly saved," and vice versa.

As to rangers of other alignments — Chaotic Good and Lawful Good — one can only speculate as to the reasons why they are granted druid spells. The druid deity (or deities) might consider any ranger's respect for and good treatment of the realm of Nature as deserving of such boons. If so, the thoughtful ranger should realize that his or her actions in variance to the true Neutral ways will be balanced, in the long run, by someone else's converse actions — perhaps those of the local druid, "repairing the damage" caused by excessive Law, Chaos, or Good.

Moral extremists — those rangers who are notably and constantly (i.e. excessively, to the druid) Lawful or Chaotic — might be denied spells by the DM, having strayed too far (again, from the druidical perspective) from the balance of all things. If the DM excludes rangers of certain extreme alignments from spell acquisition, the players should first be informed of this, whether their rangers are of low or high level.

As a final note, research into the ways of ancient druids can help flesh out the class and its campaign activities. Druid beliefs were historically anchored in a gnostic monotheism, the worship of a Great Mother of All (known by different names in different times and places). Druidism evolved from an early matriarchal stage, limiting the priesthood to females only (and hence giving rise to the woodland females, dryads *et al.*), to the later more open stage, allowing males. Traces of druidism were found as late as 1874, in Russia. Acorns and oak leaves are still used in wreaths and harvest decorations, and many towns hold seasonal ceremonies at great oak trees. To some extent, the remnants of the ancient religion persist to this very day.

Of course, AD&D gaming seeks only to base its fantasy upon historical actualities, and it in no sense suggests reality or the re-creation of supposed pagan practices. A sound knowledge of history, however, and an understanding of ancient and medieval culture, will certainly enhance the enjoyment of a campaign and enable the DM to add much to the milieu.

# The forum

In regard to the current debate over the importance of the "official" rules, I offer the following words of Mr. Frank Mentzer, TSR's Creative Aide to the President, from POLYHEDRON Newszine #9:

"An emphasis on role playing comes closer to the original concept of the game than does an obsession with details. Gary [Gygax] doesn't run a straight AD&D® campaign; he's too creative to feel comfortable in that rigid system. You say you are, too? How many games, modules, and articles have you written lately? Have you given the system, as published, a chance? Have you tried the D&D® game, a flexible and adaptable framework, instead of the far more complex and regimented AD&D system?"

The letters in the Forum in DRAGON issue #98 all extol either a "nitty-gritty" rules fixation, a more flexible interpretation of the word "official," or a combination of the two. Unfortunately, none of the correspondents mention gaming experience or creativity, two factors which I feel cannot be ignored in this discussion. I use my own experiences to illustrate this point.

I started my first D&D game eight years ago, having no experience with the rules or even RPGs in general. Back then, all we had were the classic "blue book" and D&D module B1, *In Search of the Unknown*. Beyond that, we made our own dungeons, in which yellow mold lined the only passage into an orc's chamber and nobody said anything. How did the orc get its food? Nobody wondered and nobody cared.

Since then, I have almost doubled my age and have grown in all respects. I am not the same person I was then, and I don't play the same game. Today I play a highly modified form of the AD&D game which is nonviolent. Very few parts of the game are unchanged from their published form, yet enough has been salvaged so that the game is at least recognizable as an AD&D game.

Eight years ago, I would have laughed at anyone who suggested that I play a nonviolent game. We played the D&D game for its wonderful combat system, and giving that up would be like removing your left arm, if not your heart. But even if I had the inclination to create a nonviolent game, I still could not have pulled it off. I simply did not have the knowledge or skill to manage a game like the one I play now.

One of the most important steps in the creation of my present campaign was the switch to AD&D gaming in one \$50 swoop. The game was somewhat overwhelming in its scope, but we played it exactly as published for some time. As we progressed through our campaign, we began to notice flaws in the game and started to create ways to change the game to our own ends. The eventual outcome was our current campaign. The campaign will end soon, and the game will change further.

There is no question that the AD&D game, as published, is both "complex and regimented." But it must be fully comprehended to be altered. Otherwise, the results of change will never be noticed. The only way to understand the game is to play it, at least for a short amount of time, as it is written. After some experience with the game, you may feel your creative impulses suggest

changes in the system. You may wish to borrow from other games, from other gamers, and from other sources of literature. By all means, do it. But at least know what it's like to play without the changes you and your players wish to install in the game. It will make the changes that much more rewarding.

One note: If the AD&D game does seem too "rigid" to you, try the D&D game. It is a good system in itself which allows a more freeform style of gaming. It is designed to be added to by individual DMs in a manner that cannot be done with the AD&D game.

Michael D. Selinker  
Seattle, Wash.

\* \* \* \*

Although this letter isn't about an actual part of gaming, I think some people will be familiar with this story. I first began playing the D&D game about three and a half years ago. I'm not really sure if you could call it playing, since I was in the sixth grade at the time; in my area, that was the time when everyone played the D&D game and no one played it right. Everyone played in a Monty Haul campaign, but no one had even heard the term.

All through seventh grade, players slowly thinned out and the remaining players I gamed with decided to reform. We had long "meetings" for our D&D club in which we ended up either watching TV or fooling around outside. Our DM said he'd never done enough of his world for us to play in it, although he can't really be blamed for it since no one else had the initiative to be a DM. As expected, this finally ended in the late summer after seventh grade, with the group splitting in half.

At this point, I finally gained enough initiative to become the DM. I was inspired by an excellent DM who was a counselor at a camp I had gone to that summer, and I was the DM all through eighth grade. By this time, I realized that many people who used to play the D&D game no longer did. I'm quite sure (let's face it, folks) that the reason is that D&D gaming is not considered cool to a majority of kids starting into the eighth grade. While I've been lucky enough for it not to have happened to me, many kids that play the D&D game are considered nerds.

So, what finally happened was this. I was playing D&D with two other kids, I was using characters while I was DMing, and we had 17 characters between the three of us. Characters were reaching 4th level after one adventure. Now, I know the Gary Gygax and the Lenard Lakofkas are screaming "Blasphemy!" at this moment, but instead, I think more people are shocked to realize that other people are in the same situation that they are in. You have to realize how hard it is for a DM to be a good DM with only two other players. Finally, my two players began to lose interest, probably for three reasons. First, they were a little worried about their "image." Second, they were never as serious about playing as I was. Third, my campaign was not all that good, and if there had been better

(Turn to page 98)

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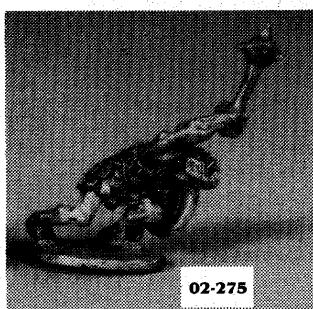
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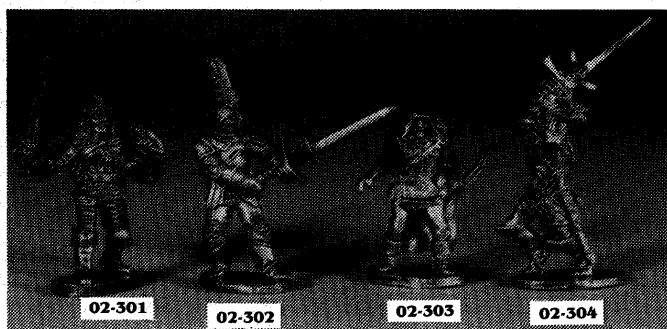
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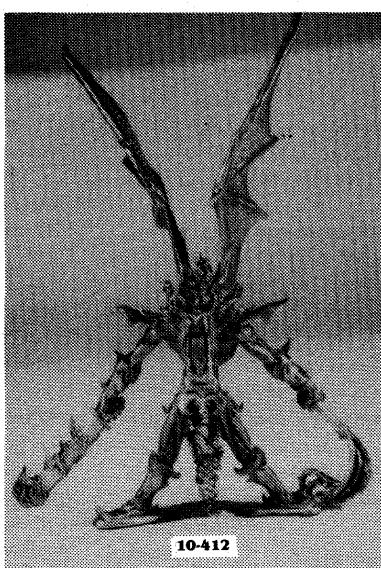


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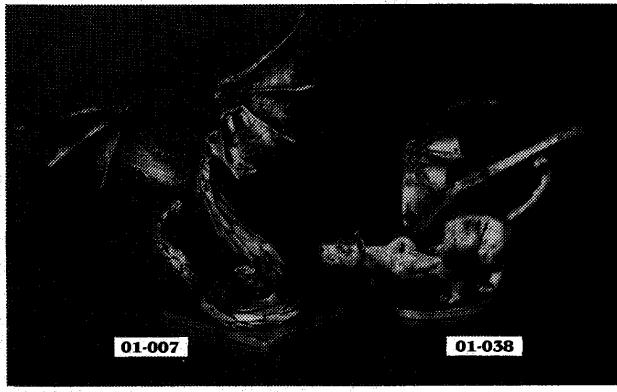
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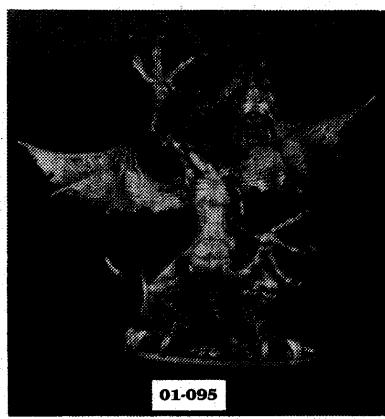


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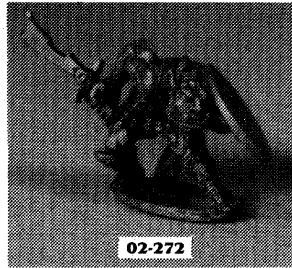
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# Pages from the Mages V

## From Elminster, to Ed, to you — more lore

by Ed Greenwood

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Strangely, there is nothing Elminster likes better than sitting in a canoe, his blazing pipe between his teeth, and looking up at what must to him be completely unfamiliar stars as I paddle slowly, softly down the river on warm summer nights. He likes to watch the fireflies wink and glow (his pipe-smoke keeps the mosquitoes — and, indeed, everything else — away) in the darkness under the trees, and talk of legends and scary tales of the Realms, and of magic. He hasn't yet figured out that the lifejacket I make him wear has one of those tiny tape recorders in it, and he knows I can't take notes while paddling, so he doesn't mind telling me all about more lost spell books (figuring I'll have forgotten everything after a long night of chatting, and several drinks). I'd feel more guilty about my small deception if I hadn't seen him swipe a bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream from my mantelpiece just before he trotted off to the gate to the Realms last time. I wonder if he'll have worked out how to make the stuff in the Realms before his next visit. . . .

I have accumulated details of another four spellbooks by the above method, and here they are.

### Sabirine's Specular

#### Appearance

A large, heavy tome (five handwidths across by ten handwidths high, two fingers thick) of twenty-eight fine vellum pages with stamped brass corner-pieces, and covers of thin black marble affixed to the thinnest of suth-wood sheets by large brass corner caps.

#### History and description

Sabirine was a mage of long ago, instrumental in the exploration of the North; her adventures are a part of the fireside lore of traders and travelers there yet. She compiled and concealed spellbooks in various caches and favorite haunts about the wilderlands, and the one known as The Specular has survived, for it is known to have been in the library of the sage Eiron the Old in Neverwinter until his death — and the subsequent pillaging of his house by thieves of the Red Hand guild — only four winters ago.

Sabirine learned the secrets of lichdom but chose to die a natural death instead. She was a mage with an especial interest in cantrips, and was an enthusiastic advocate of the continued use and refinement of

cantrips by magic-users of long career and high level. The Specular, for instance, contains three unique cantrips developed by Sabirine: *catfeet*, *snatch*, and *spark*.

Each cantrip and spell in the Specular is set forth alone on a page, and there are two additional pages at either end of the book; that at the beginning being an inscription identifying the tome as belonging to. Sabirine, with her rune (an "S" depicted as a swan), and that at the end bearing a curious piece of black felt in the shape of a vial. The frontispiece page is actually a unique spell, *spell engine* (detailed hereafter) of unknown authorship, which has been concealed by use of a secret *page* spell. The command word of the secret *page* is not known. The last page is thought to be an unused magical useful item (see *robe of useful items* description in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*) — a *potion of extra-healing*, Elminster believes.

The pages between bear six cantrips: *catfeet* (detailed hereafter), *clean*, *freshen*, *snatch* (detailed hereafter), *spark* (detailed hereafter), and *unlock*, and spells as follows: *comprehend languages*, *enlarge*, *light*, *Nystul's magic aura*, *sleep*, *bladethirst* (a unique spell, detailed hereafter), *detect evil*, *ESP*: *clairaudience*, *gust of wind*, *tongues*, *charm monster*, *dig*, *fire charm*, *Merald's murderous mist* (a unique spell taught to Sabirine by her tutor, the mighty archmage Merald; the spell is detailed hereafter), *polymorph other*, *Bigby's interposing hand*, *disintegrate*, *geas*, and *phase door*.

#### Spell Engine (Abjuration/Alteration)

Level: 8

Range: 0

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Sphere about caster, of 1 "radius per level"

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: This rare and powerful magic does not come into operation until another spell is cast within its area of effect. When that occurs, a huge, shining wheel or vertical disc of glowing white light will instantly appear (some inches above any ground or floor that was there at the time of casting, or is there at the time of activation) where the caster stood while casting the *engine* (even if that spellcasting occurred centuries before). It will begin to turn, with a gentle rushing noise, and will absorb the energy of all spells cast within its

area of effect — so that they are wasted and do not work, but serve instead to power the turning wheel. The wheel does nothing except turn, light up an area, and benefit magic-user and illusionists with a curious side-effect: Its sound and energies aid magical concentration, and spell memorizing times for spellcasters who study within its area of effect are halved. Once activated, an *engine* will not disappear until dispelled; if starved for magical energy, it will merely turn more and more slowly, and gradually grow dim, until it hangs motionless, translucent and ghostly.

A *spell engine* cannot be dispelled by *dispel magic* (which it will absorb), nor affected by normal weapons (which pass through it as though it does not exist). A *wish*, *limited wish*, or *alter reality* spell, properly worded, will destroy it, as will contact with any magical item or artifact — which causes a magical explosion doing 1-20 points of damage to all within 1" (1-8 to those from 1" + to 2" away), and destroys a magical item; an artifact must make a saving throw. If such an artifact is not destroyed, there is a 75% chance that it will be shifted (with or without any creature wielding it) into another plane of existence.

*Magic mouths*, *glyphs*, *symbols*, and protective circles or other runic magics will not be affected by a *spell engine*; thus, a doorway can be guarded by a *symbol*, and a *spell engine* cast in front of the doorway will prevent the *symbol* from being dispelled. *Detect magic* will reveal the presence and shape of an unactivated *spell engine*; the wheel is typically 12' in diameter and 2' thick, standing upright on edge, although it will grow marginally larger if charged by many spells and the surroundings permit such growth (its area of effect remaining unchanged). It is often cast in a narrow passageway before a door. Until activated, the wheel of a *spell engine* has no physical existence and cannot be touched. A *disintegrate* spell will have no effect on an unactivated *spell engine*, but it will destroy an activated *spell engine*, with an explosion identical in effect to that caused by contact between a *spell engine* and a magic item or artifact. Note that a *spell engine*'s area of effect extends through rock and void alike in a perfect sphere; it cannot be easily avoided by use of a *passwall*, *dig*, or *phase door*. Living creatures not possessing magic items can pass through the area of effect of an active *spell engine* without effect; it does not "drain" spells from minds. Inactive *spell engines* cannot be contacted by a living

creature, magic item, or artifact, and thus cannot be so activated; nor will the presence of a functioning spell, psionic effect, or magic item function activate a *spell engine* – it is only the actual casting of a spell that activates the *engine*.

The material components for this spell are a small disc of fine, polished ivory, bone, shell, or marble; a drop of water or one of the caster's tears; and a gem (any type) of at least 1,000 gp value.

#### Catfeet (Alteration)

A of E: 1 pair of feet (self)  
CT: 1/6 segment

This personal cantrip, enacted by making a stroking motion with the fingers of one hand, acts upon the caster (and cannot be made to affect another person) for 1 round (plus one additional round per experience level of the caster, above first level). Movements or the weight (tread) of the caster's feet, regardless of the surface being walked upon or climbed, are rendered silent. This does not cloak any other sounds made by the caster, such as breathing, the swish of clothing, sounds made with the hands grasping or moving, etc. Anything dislodged or broken by the caster's feet will make whatever noise it normally would, and traps or other devices triggered by a footstep will also function normally. In addition, the caster will land, balanced and unwinded, on his or her feet, from a fall of any height suffered while the cantrip is in effect (and a modifier of -1 from each die of falling damage suffered applies).

The dweomer also lends some surety of traction and movement; a - 15% chance of slipping or falling in damp, greasy, or otherwise slightly slippery conditions underfoot. Note that this does not enable the caster to climb or walk upon walls or ceilings unless other magic is employed (such as a *spider climb* spell), but will reinforce all such magics to lend increased safety in hazardous conditions.

#### Snatch (Evocation)

A of E: 1 person  
CT: 1/6 segment

This person-affecting cantrip causes a brief, violent jerking force to act upon a body portion or limb of a subject creature. This force has little strength, but may serve to cause a running being to stumble or turn about, or cause someone to fumble or drop small objects such as keys, material components, gems, coins, and the like. A saving throw (of the subject, vs. spell) determines whether such objects are actually dropped, or a fall or mishap actually occurs – or whether the *snatch* merely delays the subject for 1-3 segments. In no case can successfully snatched objects be animated or conveyed magically by the caster; the *snatch* is a brief tug, not an *unseen servant*. The caster hisses softly at the subject being (who

must be within 4" of the caster – within 1" if the caster is a O-level apprentice), and simultaneously makes a jerking motion with a hooked finger, visualizing the location and precise direction of the desired *snatching*, to enact the cantrip.

#### Spark (Evocation)

A of E: Special  
CT: 1/2 segment

This personal cantrip is enacted by the caster snapping his or her fingers and making a popping verbal noise simultaneously; this causes a large, powerful blue spark to come into being at any precise location (familiar, or unseen and merely chosen by direction and distance) within a range of 1" per level of the caster. The energy of the spark will be transmitted by any conducting materials it contacts, but the spark does not require the presence of electrical (or any other) energy, and is not affected by dampness or other atmospheric conditions. If the caster is of 6th level or higher, the cantrip will Produce 2-5 (1d4 + 1) sparks in the same spot, in rapid (successive segments) succession.

#### Bladethirst (Alteration)

Level: 2  
Range: Touch  
Duration: 1 round  
Area of Effect: Blade(s) of one weapon  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Saving Throw: None

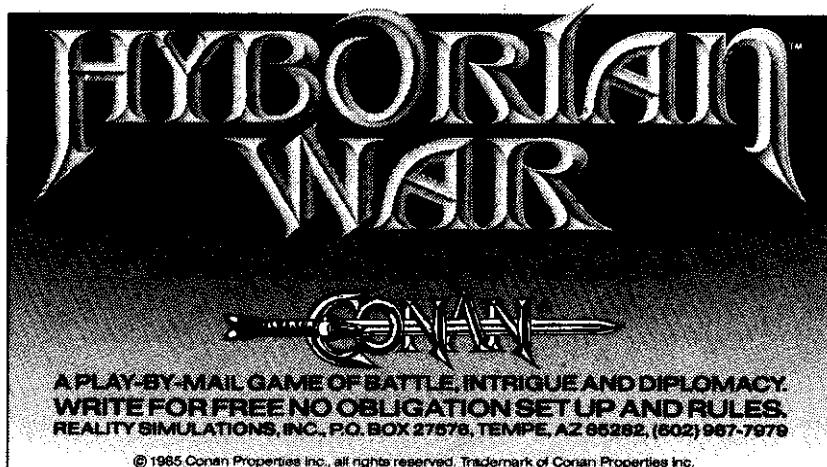
Explanation/Description: By means of a pinch of powdered silver, adamantine, or mithral, and at least a drop of (human) blood, the caster endows the blade (or blades) of an edged weapon with a +3 bonus to hit on the following round only. This temporary magic is visible as a blue-white glow about the weapon, and fades when the blade strikes a creature or the spell expires, whichever first occurs. The weapon must be touched by the caster, and can be wielded by the caster or any creature – but if it is thrown, cast, or launched (i.e., a

fired missile weapon such as an arrow), the + 3 bonus will not apply. (Note that an arrow held to stab like a dagger would gain the bonus.) The weapon does not gain a + 3 bonus on damage, but is considered magical for "to hit" purposes on the round following spellcasting, and if it must make a saving throw during that round, it gains a + 3 bonus on the save. (Polearms such as spears and halberds are edged weapons, but spiked weapons such as a flail or a morning star are not.)

#### Merald's Murderous Mist (Evocation)

Level: 4  
Range: 0  
Duration: 2 rounds  
Area of Effect: 2" radius sphere  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 4 segments  
Saving Throw: Neg.

Explanation/Description: A billowing cloud of misty vapors is created by the use of this spell; it radiates outwards from the caster to fill a 2" radius spherical area above and below the caster's ground level, penetrating all obstructions in only 2 segments; at the end of the round of casting the magic takes effect, and the mist changes in hue from blue-gray to green, becoming poisonous. All breathing creatures within the area of effect not possessing a (magical) separate air supply – except the caster, who is immune to the effects of his or her own *murderous mist* – must immediately save vs. spell. Those who save are unharmed. Those who do not take 2-8 points of damage from the vapor, which is corrosive to flesh but does not affect clothing or items. Creatures which can't move out of the area of effect within the round take a further 1-4 Points of damage on the following round, as the vapors begin to combine with the air and disappear. The globe of *murderous mist* is a magically bound, precise area unaffected by natural or magical winds. *Dispel magic* or *part water* will cause it to disappear before expiration of the spell, and various magics or items (such as *rope trick* or a *portable hole*) will protect an individual by providing escape from the *mist*, but it is



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otherwise unaffected by natural or magical forces.

## Glanvyl's Workbook

### Appearance

A small (one handspan in height, seven fingers wide, and two thick) volume constructed from two leather-covered boards held together by brass triangular-head nails, through a central spine of heavy hide to which are sewn a dozen parchment sheets. The outside front cover bears a personal rune, thus:



Beneath it, an inscription in Common: "Glanvyl — his Workbook." Both rune and inscription are burned into the leather, and the grooves filled with molten copper, which has hardened into rainbow-scattered, predominantly orange metal traceries.

### History and description

Glanvyl is an unknown magic-user who assembled this Workbook — probably under the tutelage of one or more magic users of greater power — in the caravan-crossroads city of Scornubel some three hundred years ago. It was hidden in a chest of silk gowns, behind a loose stone, in a

cellar wall of a house owned by the merchant Pentle, and before him by the illusionist and adventurer Alkunda Gar. After Pentle's house was destroyed by a fire, one of the rebuilders found it, and took it with stealth to the sage Bendulphine, who gave him five hundred pieces of gold for it.

Bendulphine died of natural causes, shortly thereafter, and his son Tresk took the Workbook to Waterdeep, where he sold it to a conjurer, one Brasztor. This new owner disappeared shortly thereafter, and his rooms were rifled by the Master Thief Nighteye — or someone else who dared to use his mark. The whereabouts of the Workbook at present are unknown; Nighteye has probably traded or sold it, but he could have done either of these things with almost anyone, anywhere.

From Bendulphine's notes, we learn that the Workbook's twelve pages bear the following spells and writings: the unique cantrips *horn*, *listen*, and *scorch* (all described hereafter), set forth one to a page, and the spells *write*, *detect magic*, *Leomund's trap*, and *Nystul's magic aura*, one to a page, in the order given. These are followed by a page of notes on the intensities and hues of various dweomers viewed by *detect magic* (confused and subjective — of little practical use), and then a unique druid spell, *smoke ghost* (presumably copied by Glanvyl through use of a *write* spell, and then found to be an untranslatable druidic prayer — or perhaps never identified by him at all).

Particulars of this spell are given below. The last two pages of the workbook contain spell-ink formulae for writing the spells *haste* and *lightning bolt*, respectively (these are also reproduced below).

### Horn (Evocation)

A of E: *Special*

CT: *Special*

A haunting-sound *horn* cantrip causes the sound of a non-existent horn or trumpet being winded to be heard within 2" (6" if loud). The pitch, volume, apparent distance (echo and muffling), and length of note (only a single call is permitted) are all controllable by the caster. The caster faintly or inaudibly hums a tone to set the pitch, and then opens his or her mouth into an O-shape while cupping the fingers of one hand over it. The trumpet call will last as long as the mouth is open in an O. The volume and steadiness of the note are controlled by the fingers (which flare open to increase volume, and pinch shut to mute it) and can be shaken to give a tremulous note. A caster practiced in the use of this cantrip can imitate horn blasts perfectly.

### Listen (Alteration)

A of E: *1 creature*

CT: *1/10 segment*

A person-affecting *listen* cantrip enables the caster to attract the attention of a target creature within 6". The cantrip is activated by the caster's pointing at the target and then at himself, while simultaneously saying, "Ahem." The target will then be alerted to the message subsequently (beginning within 1 segment of the casting) spoken by the caster — i.e., across a wide street or crowded room, etc. The cantrip does not act as a *message* spell; there must be no barriers to sound between caster and target, and the cantrip does not improve the target's hearing or the volume of the caster's voice — nor does it capture the target's full concentration, so it will not ruin or delay spellcasting. If the message is spoken in a language not understood by the target, the cantrip does not translate it. The cantrip is ideal for alerting a friend to the presence of the caster. A *listen* cantrip will never be cast upon the wrong target due to movement during the caster's pointing; the caster's view of the target determines the target.

### Scorch (Alteration)

A of E: *1 object*

CT: *1/3 segment*

This reversed cantrip, despite its name, creates neither flame nor heat. Instead, by magically exciting the molecules of any non-living object (of up to 100 gp weight), it causes the object to char without noise, smell, or smoke. The caster must touch the object ("to hit" roll required if another creature is attempting to protect the object

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sprinkle into a crucible containing the squid sepia, lemming blood, cheetah blood, and holy water. Stir well, and place over a well-established fire. Immerse Pegasus heart in crucible and heat mixture steadily to boiling, stirring occasionally. The heart will dissolve slowly; when it is gone, add the powdered gems, and remove from heat, allowing the crucible to cool undisturbed. When cool, add the quicksilver; do not stir. Cover, keep in a dark place for at least four days and nights, and then uncover under the light of the moon (which must be waxing or full). Decant into a flask or vial, add the human blood, and shake well.

#### **Lightning Bolt** ink preparation

1 ounce giant octopus ink  
 1 ounce crushed amber (may be from several gemstones or fragments; honey-orange hue is best)  
 1 large blue sapphire, powdered  
 1 ounce powdered copper (pure, not sulfate) (or 1 ounce powdered gold)  
 1 volt tail, intact  
 6 or more drops volt blood (or 12 or more drops electric eel ichor)  
 6 + ounces umpleby flesh  
 water  
 metal rod (ferrous metal, any type)

Boil the umpleby flesh and volt tail in a copper vessel, until the liquid has boiled away. Remove from heat and add the giant

octopus ink and powdered gemstones, stirring with the rod of ferrous metal. Pour into a stone bowl or depression and add the volt blood, a drop at a time. Leave an end of the rod in the mixture. Lightning must then be induced to strike the rod; lightning of a natural storm is best, although magic such as *lightning bolt*, *call lightning*, and *control weather*-induced storms will do. Electrical charges of smaller magnitude (such as those produced by an umpleby, an electric eel, or a *shocking grasp* spell) can also be used, but these must be applied repeatedly; once a night for six successive nights. (A combination of these sources may be employed.) Thereafter, let stand. When the mixture turns blue, it is ready to use.

## The Red Book of War

### **Appearance**

A large (two elbow-to-forefinger cubits across by three high), impressive volume whose covers are made of used, blood-stained armor plates beaten flat, carefully shaped, and hinged at the spine of the book to form a very strong binding, containing fifty-one thin pages of burnished copper, carefully stamped with letters and sigils, each page containing one prayer or clerical spell on one side only. No sigil or title is visible on the outer covers. A permanent, pale-red flickering *faerie fire* emanates from the book's pages.

### **History and description**

Worship of the war-god Tempus is well established in the more lawless and troubled lands of the Realms, and a numerous, well-organized priesthood has come into being over the years. More of Tempus need not be said here; the Red Book of War is one of half a dozen or so similar volumes, temple tomes containing prayers for use by the priests of Tempus. However, the Red Book, unlike its fellows, has gone missing — lost to thieves in Telflamm when the great Tower of Tempus there was robbed one night three winters ago by representatives of the local thieves' guild. It seems that Taeron, High Priest and Champion Rampant of Tempus in Telflamm, refused to render unto Volludan, Guildmaster of the Shadowmasters of Telflamm, certain protective monies — and so the Shadowmasters relieved the temple of several of its greatest treasures, including two great magical blades, a *helm of brilliance*, and the Red Book.

The Shadowmasters promptly quarreled over their booty (aided by vengeful priests and worshipers of Tempus — i.e., most of the mercenaries in the city), and Volludan and several of his lieutenants perished. All of the temple treasures were recovered except the Red Book, which is still actively sought by all priests of Tempus; a reward of 25,000 pieces of gold (plus, if the finder is a faithful of Tempus, a promotion of one rank in the priesthood) can be claimed at any temple of the Wargod in return for the complete Red Book of War. The Red Book

will be recognized on sight by all canons and higher-&king priests of Tempus, and they will do anything — including mounting an ambush or pitched battle with all the armed men they can muster — necessary to regain it. Its present whereabouts are unknown, but it is thought that thieves conveyed it far from Telflamm, and that it may have changed hands several times since its theft.

The Red Book contains the following cleric spells, one to a page, appearing in the order mentioned (all are in standard *Players Handbook* form except for some unique spells, which are described hereafter — these unique prayers being special to the priests of Tempus; they may or may not be heard, and answered identically, by other deities): *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect magic*, *remove fear*, *augury*, *chant*, *hold person*, *know alignment*, *resist fire*, *slow poison*, *spiritual hammer*, *animate dead*, *continual light*, *cure blindness*, *cure disease*, *dispel magic*, *feign death*, *holy flail* (special prayer; see below), *locate object*, *prayer*, *remove curse*, *speak with dead*, *cure serious wounds*, *detect lie*, *divination*, *exorcise*, *neutralize poison*, *protection from evil 10' radius*, *reveal* (special prayer; see below), *tongues*, *atonement*, *commune*, *dispel evil*, *flame strike*, *quest*, *raise dead*, *true seeing*, *blade barrier*, *heal*, *speak with monsters*, *stone tell*, *word of recall*, *bladeless* (special prayer; see below), *gate*, *regenerate*, *restoration*, *resurrection*, *sacred link* (special prayer; see below), *symbol*, and *wind walk*. The special prayers to Tempus contained in the Red Book are as follows:

### **Holy Flail** (Invocation/Alteration)

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 round/level

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 6 segments

Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: By calling upon his or her deity, the cleric casting a *holy flail* spell temporarily transforms his or her own holy symbol, or any non-bladed weapon which the cleric touches wielded by another being, into a magical holy flail. For 1 round per experience level of the cleric, the holy symbol or transformed weapon becomes a snakelike, flexible field of force attached to a rigid hand-hold; an invisible, crackling spectral flail that is +2 "to hit" when wielded in battle, and is considered a magical weapon for "to hit" purposes. A strike from a holy flail does 2-7 points of damage and, if wielded by a cleric, an additional 1 hit point per experience level of the cleric damage per strike to all undead, and to any creature of a greatly different alignment than that of the cleric (see below).

If a *holy flail* spell is cast upon a bladed weapon, nothing will happen, and the spell will be lost. If it is cast upon a weapon held by a creature of a greatly different align-



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ment than that of the casting cleric (*i.e.*, good vs. evil; lawful, chaotic, and neutral considerations do not matter in this case), the *flail* will not form. A *holy flail* will always vanish if it is transferred from one creature to another, unless the being receiving it is the spellcaster or another cleric of the same deity. A *holy flail* does not need continued concentration on the part of the cleric to maintain it, and can be dropped to enable spellcasting (or thrown as a weapon) without vanishing. A *holy flail* created from a holy symbol can only be wielded by a cleric of the same deity as the symbol, or it will vanish. The material components of this spell are the holy symbol or weapon (which is not consumed or damaged in any way by the spell) and a pinch of powdered gemstone (of any type).

#### **Reveal** (Divination) Reversible

Level: 4

Range: *Touch*

Duration: 4 rounds

Area of Effect: 12" sight range

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 7 segments

Saving Throw: *None*

**Explanation/Description:** This spell is cast upon the cleric or another (willing) creature into whose eyes the cleric induces the material component of the spell. It allows the affected being to see clearly the

location and outline of symbols, *glyphs of warding*, magically concealed inscriptions, and dweomers existing upon surfaces viewed, even if these are not yet activated (such as *magic mouth*, *Mordenkainen's faithful hound*, *Leomund's trap*, *Nystul's magic aura*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *wall of force*). No clue as to the precise nature of the magic is given by the spell, but protective circles, *symbols*, and *glyphs* can all be scrutinized in detail and might well be identified by someone familiar with them, or recorded for later study.

**Reveal** will show the presence of *gates* (or other links between planes, including the presence of an astral silvery cord), inactive or not, but will not reveal astral, ethereal, or invisible creatures or things. Unlike *true seeing*, the auras of creatures are not shown; nor are polymorphed or magically changed things shown for what they truly are (although the dweomer of an *illusion*, for example, would be seen) or formerly were.

The spell requires an ointment composed of four drops of the cleric's (or spell recipient's) blood; two drops of water; two drops of giant squid sepia; a pinch of the powdered herb eyebright; and two powdered gemstones, a large blue sapphire and a carbuncle of at least medium size. The cleric mixes these in a bowl or depression of stone, china, or earthenware (not wood or metal) with his or her finger, speaks the words of the spell while holding his or her

holy symbol over the paste, and then applies it to the eyes.

The reverse of the spell, *conceal*, will mask all the above things from any creature to whom the ointment (composed in this case of a pinch of powdered monkshood (aconite); six drops of onion juice; a pinch of dust; and seven drops of water, mixed and espelled as above) is applied for 1 turn per level of the cleric casting the *conceal*, and if during this time the affected being employs *true seeing* or *detect magic* or equivalent magics, these spells will appear to work, but the phenomena listed above will simply not be seen by the affected creature. Awake, mobile creatures unwilling to have the ointment for either version of the spell applied to their eyes must be contacted by the cleric twice (two successful "to hit" rolls require), but washing or any means short of *dispel magic*, *exorcise*, or a *limited wish* will not prevent the ointment from working.

#### **Bladebless** (Necromantic)

Level: 7

Range: *Special*

Duration: *Permanent*

Area of Effect: *Special*

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: *Special*

**Explanation/Description:** By use of this

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spell, a cleric heals a specific wound by bestowing a blessing on the weapon that caused it. This magic works only upon a non-magical bladed weapon, which the cleric must touch and hold as he or she intones the blessing. Immediately upon this being done, the last wound caused by that blade (if any wound has been so caused, to any living thing, within 1 turn per experience level of the cleric) will instantly be fully and completely healed, even if the blade was poisoned, a disease conferred, or a limb or head was severed. Such healing occurs even if the affected creature is several planes distant at the casting of the *bladeless* — and if death occurred due to a failed system shock roll or poison saving throw, then life is restored. (If death was due to cumulative hit point loss, life is not restored; nor will this magic heal other wounds upon the victim's body.) The healed creature need not ever be seen, touched, or even known to the cleric. If such a wound has already healed or been magically healed, it is unaffected, and the *bladeless* magic is lost. The material components for this spell are the weapon in question, the cleric's holy symbol, and a drop of the cleric's own blood.

#### Sacred Link (Evocation/Alteration)

Level: 7

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Saving Throw: None

**Explanation/Description:** To bring about a sacred *link*, a cleric must hold in his or her hands the two objects to be linked, and then cast the spell. The two items must be fashioned of the same material(s) and be roughly the same size; they cannot be living creatures; and ideally they will be nearly identical (i.e., matching swords, scrolls, statuettes, etc.) The *sacred link* spell causes an invisible magical bond to be created between the two items; both will radiate a very faint dweomer, and although the link is not a tangible pathway or thread that one can follow, what happens to one item will also happen to the other, even if they are separated by myriad planes or any distance.

The link lasts until one of the items is destroyed (or until a *dispel magic* is cast upon one of the items, which negates the *link*). For instance, if a map or scroll is sold to an enemy and the match for it is retained by the cleric, his or her temple, or even another being, several days after the sale this being could burn his or her copy — and the enemy's copy would also be consumed, regardless of its location or situation (i.e., if the map was buried or underwater, no flames would occur, but the map or scroll would still turn to ashes and be destroyed, in unison with its burning twin; on the other hand, if the enemy's copy is in a backpack or on a desk with other papers, its immolation could well ignite other, adjacent flammable materials).

By means of this spell a weapon can be damaged or destroyed by affecting its twin

or conversely, any item could be improved by plating with gold, adorning with gems, or careful carving. This spell can be used to link magic items, and thus, re-charging or activating one would identically affect the other — but there is a 3% cumulative chance per use of the *link* (which is involuntary and not under the control of the cleric or another being; one cannot choose to have one action duplicated in the twin item, and another not) that one of the items will shatter or explode (discharging all of its functions or charges), and end the *link*. The material components for this spell are the two items, the cleric's holy symbol, and a strand of fine wire, human hair, or spiderweb.

## The Alcaister

### Appearance

A large, russet-colored volume constructed of metal plates covered with burlap or hessian, tied together with a spine of waxed, intricately interwoven leather thongs ("like the lacings on a lady's high leather riding booth," according to the sage Nornagrym). To the weavings are sewn forty-six pages of the finest thick parchment, each containing a simple magic spell or cantrip — except the last, which bears a curious rune, thus:



and in Common, the word "Kuhoralmin-thannas" written in a circle around it. The outer covers bear only the inscription "The Alcaister" burned in small, fine flowing letters in Common, picked out in paints of silver. The book shows only light weathering, but its appearance gives the impression of some age.

### History and description

The Alcaister is of great antiquity but unknown origin; it was written somewhere in the North by a mage of good penmanship and some powers at least six hundred years ago, when it appears in a merchant's catalogue-of-cargo as declared before the plague-masters (quarantine officers) of the time, of Waterdeep. It was passed into the city, and presumably sold, but does not surface again until brought to the sage Ardagundus in Baldr's Gate by an adventurer, named Wilund, in payment for information as to the whereabouts and uses of the Magical Chessmen of Ultham-Urre. Argandus gave the book to his apprentice Nornagrym for cataloguing and study, and it is from Nornagrym's exacting catalogue that precise details of The Alcaister come.

Nornagrym is believed to have brought the book with him to Waterdeep upon his master's death, where it reposed in his library until his own death, whereupon it

vanished again. It was observed by the sorcerer Zemloth of Amn to be in the library of his onetime tutor, Orgoth the Tainted (the same who was later destroyed by three demons he had summoned), but was not found when the party of the adventurer Malahuke searched the hidden, untouched tunnels of Orgoth's ruined fortress. Its present whereabouts are a complete mystery, but Zemloth asserts that it must still exist, because he encountered a prestidigitator in a tavern in Zazesspur who employed a *sting* cantrip (set forth only, as far as Zemloth knows, in The Alcaister). The prestidigitator, one Mavrhone, was involved in a tavern brawl at the time and did not survive it, so Zemloth was unable to inquire where and from whom the cantrip had been learned.

The Alcaister has a tradition of slaying those who read it; as more and more of the book is perused, the reader grows weaker and weaker, and finally slips into slumber from which he or she does not wake.

Nornagrym found the cause of this regrettable side-effect; the edges of The Alcaister's metal pages are coated with a colorless, transparent gummy substance of unknown origin — a contact poison as yet unidentified and seemingly unique. This substance works through skin (a cut is not necessary) and it numbs the senses subtly, so that the victim is not likely to notice its effects. Each contact with (or turning of) a page drains 1 hp; the body recovers from such damage at normal healing rate. There is also a temporary (2-5 turns) loss of one point of strength (18/percentage to 18, 18 to 17, and so on) for every 5 hp of damage so suffered. This substance retains its efficacy after many years and resists attempts to remove it, but Nornagrym found that its efforts (assuming one is aware of its presence) can be simply avoided by wearing gloves or by turning the pages with a knife or other aid.

The Alcaister's forty-six pages contain the following inscriptions, one to a page: the unique cantrips *cut*, *gallop*, and *sting* (all described below), and the spells *affect normal fires*, *charm person*, *dancing lights*, *erase*, *hold portal*, *identify magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *read magic*, *spider climb*, *audible glamer*, *ESP fools gold*, *locate object*, *magic mouth*, *mirror image*, *rope trick*, *wizard lock*, *clairaudience*, *dispel magic*, *flame arrow*, *gust of wind*, *haste*, *hold person*, *infravision*, *slow*, *water breathing*, *charm monster*, *dimension door*, *ice storm*, *remove curse*, *wizard eye*, *Bigby's interposing hand*, *cone of cold*, *feeblemind*, *anti-magic shell*, *death spell*, *geas*, *reconstruction* (unique spell, described below), *reverse gravity simulacrum*, *body sympathy* (unique spell, described below).

### Cut (Alteration)

A of E: 1 object

CT: 1/10 segment

By means of this useful cantrip, thin

objects such as rope, cord, delicate chain, wire, cloth, wax candles, sausages, and the like, up to one inch thick per level of the caster, can be instantly severed. The caster must be able to see the object to be cut, and it must be within 2". The verbal component is a soft "snikt" sound, and the somatic component is a scissoring motion made with two adjoining fingers. Magical (even temporarily enspelled) objects are unaffected by this cantrip.

#### **Gallop** (Alteration)

A of E: One quadruped creature  
CT: 1/2 segment

When this useful cantrip is used, the caster may cause one four-legged creature (if intelligent, it gains a saving throw vs. spell — which, if successful, negates the cantrip) to move at its maximum movement rate for 1 round, plus 1 additional round per level of the caster. The beast may be ridden or not; direction traveled is arrow-straight (regardless of mount's, rider's, or caster's wishes) in the direction pointed at by the caster (if this leads into a snare, pit, or precipice known to the beast or any rider on it, a saving throw vs. spell at +3 is allowed; if successful, the beast will turn aside at the last moment and continue in a new course, detouring freely as terrain demands, until the cantrip expires). *Gallop* has the same effect on unfamiliar, unwilling, lame, or exhausted creatures alike. The enspelled beast cannot pull a laden cart or wagon without incurring a half-movement-rate penalty, and although this cantrip can be used on exhausted creatures, they can be permanently damaged or even slain by the effort (system shock roll applies in many cases). The caster can ride the enspelled creature, and in any case can halt a *gallop* before its expiration by act of will, whenever he or she wishes, if the *gallop* is of his or her own casting. The cantrip is cast by touching the target creature, making a soft kissing or clucking noise with the lips as contact is made, and continuing this noise as the caster points in the desired direction of travel (impossibilities, such as straight up into the air or straight down into the ground, will have *no effect* and will merely waste the magic); effects are immediate.

#### **Sting** (Alteration)

A of E: One creature  
CT: 1/2 segment

This person-affecting cantrip enables the caster to harm a single creature up to 4" distant in a minor way: By making a buzzing noise and pointing an extended finger at an area of his or her own anatomy, the caster causes a brief (2 segment) but intense pain in the corresponding area of the target creature (unless the latter saves vs. spell). This pain causes no permanent damage (i.e., loss of hit points), but if applied to the eyes it can blind for 1 round, or it can

silence coherent speech by afflicting the tongue, or cause delicate manipulation of tiny objects (jewelry, or material components in spellcasting) to be ruined, and the handled item(s) dropped or fumbled. Thus, spellcasting can be ruined by successful use of a *sting*. The cantrip is a once-only magic, causing but one pain if successful. It is often used to warn or cow ignorant creatures who threaten the spellcaster.

#### **Reconstruction** (Alteration/Phantasm)

Level: 6  
Range: Touch  
Duration: 1 round + 1 round/level  
Area of Effect: Special  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: By means of

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this spell, the caster temporarily restores or makes whole a broken item, even if it is badly shattered and/or portions are missing. The object is restored to its appearance before being broken — even to smell, weight, solidity, sound when struck, and texture, and will appear whole and unbroken to normal scrutiny. Detect magic will show the spell's dweomer, and a gem of seeing or true seeing spell will reveal the illusion for what it is, but the item can be touched and used — i.e., a rope or bar to hold things or support weight, a weapon to strike with, etc. — normally, without dispelling the illusion, and with results as though the item were whole. Thus, the hilt of a rusted longsword found in a tomb could be temporarily transformed into a brand-new longsword, doing the same damage in battle as the original did. Magical weapons can be temporarily mended by this spell, and due to the spell, will be magical for "to hit" purposes, but will not regain any bonuses or special properties; a silver or gold coin can be temporarily remade into a whole coin by means of this spell; and crushed gemstones restored to their previous, whole, form. If a reconstructed item is subjected to prolonged heat and impacts, however (e.g., a blade being reforged), or if a permanency or enchanted weapon spell is cast upon one, the magic will be ended, and the item will revert instantly to its real, damaged, form. A reconstructed item will not revert to its true form if its illusion is merely revealed,

and it cannot be "disbelieved" out of existence by an onlooker.

Living things cannot be affected by a reconstruction spell, nor can unbroken items be altered to the prior forms of their component materials; thus, a stone statue cannot be made to look like the boulder or mountain it was carved from. The caster need not know the original appearance of the whole item to duplicate it. A maximum volume of 1 cubic foot of actual item per level of the caster can be reconstructed (although the reconstructed whole may be far larger than this maximum, and will still appear in its entirety). The material components of this spell are the item (or fragment) to be reconstructed, a pinch of fine sand, and a pinch (of at least thumbnail size) of sticky sap or gum.

#### Body Sympathy (Necromantic)

Level: 8

Range: Special

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 8 segments

Saving Throw: Special

**Explanation/Description:** This is a "description" spell cast by a magic-user at an enemy (who must be within sight of the magic-user and concentrated upon, or if not within view, visualized by the caster, who

must speak the target being's true name (see *truename* spell, *Unearthed Arcana*) during the casting. It links the magic user and his chosen victim (who must save vs. spell at -4 to avoid the spell's effects), so that whatever happens to the magic-user's body (i.e. drowning, burning, whipping, wounding, strangulation, charming, or *feeble-mindedness*, insanity, unconsciousness, etc.) happens to the victim; if the caster dies, so too does the victim. This is not similar to the *ESP* spell (neither being gains any hint of the other's thoughts), nor does it make the victim mimic the movements and speech of the caster. It is a two-way link; damage occurring separately to the victim (or curative spells applied to the victim!) will also occur to the body of the caster. Once cast, the spell operates regardless of the caster's wishes or lack of concentration — he or she cannot willingly break the link before expiration of the spell, and can engage in other spell casting or activities without ending the *body sympathy*. The link will work across any distance and despite magical protections such as *anti-magic shell*, *prismatic sphere* or lesser barriers, but will not work from one plane to another (so if either caster or victim *plane shift*, become astral, or employ *oil of ethereality* or another such item, the link is instantly broken). Movement of target or spellcaster within a given plane will not affect the link, regardless of distances moved, speed of travel, or how often movement occurs. This spell is sometimes called "Death Link" by sages in the Realms.

#### The "gate page"

The last page of The Alcaister (that which bears the rune shown above) is a *gate* that will shift any creature standing on the rune (or at least touching it), with the book open, while the word written around the rune is spoken aloud by the creature touching the rune or another. This *plane shifting* occurs regardless of the wishes of the creature touching the rune, and will transport only one living creature (plus all items worn or carried by that creature) at a time to one of the following destinations:

- 01-48 Prime Material Plane (if used while on the Prime Material, the destination will be an alternate Prime Material Plane)
- 49-66 Avernus (uppermost layer of the Nine Hells)
- 67-76 Concordant Opposition
- 77-88 Nirvana
- 89-92 The demi-plane of Shadow
- 93-98 Any one of the five planes of Limbo
- 99-00 Other (DM's choice)

The creature being *gated* must be holding The Alcaister with his or her bare hand as the word of activation is intoned to bring the tome along; otherwise it remains behind on the Prime Material Plane. (If the *gate* is used on a plane other than the Prime Material, the book will always accompany the creature back.)

**KALI:** An American super-villainess with a background in crime and mysticism. She is wanted and has a long criminal record.

Identity: Sheena Grey      Age: 20  
 Side: Evil      Level: 1

Powers:

- 1. Heightened Expertise: Martial arts, +4 to hit
- 2. Special Weapon: Power-chucks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
- 3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

Other Weaponry:

- Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage
- 6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.

Weight: 130 lbs.      Strength: 16      Endurance: 13  
 Agility: 13      Intelligence: 12      Charisma: 15  
 Dam. Mod.: +1      Accuracy: +1      Hit Points: 9  
 Heal: .9      Car. Cap.: 351      Basic HTH: 1d6  
 Power: 54      Movement: 42"  
 Det. Hidden: 10%      Det. Danger: 14%  
 Invent. Pts.: 1.2      Inventing: 36%

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ONCE upon a time in the mythical city of Greyhawk there lived a young urchin known as Gord. His life and adventures, from slum waif to beggar-apprentice, from thief to deposer of deities, are told in a new series of novels which TSR will publish during the next two years. The initial work, *Saga of Old City*, will be available in November. The second book, *Artifact of Evil*, is planned for release in early 1986.

DRAGON® Magazine herewith presents, for your amusement and edification, a short story about Gord of Greyhawk. The action takes place in the fabulous City itself, at a time when Gord's initial indoctrination to the world at large is over and before he sets off on his first real quest. Thus, the story is an interim piece which fills the gap between the two novels mentioned above. In the story, you will meet both Gord and his bosom friend, Chert. Only after completing *Saga of Old City*, and prior to the writing of this tale, did I notice the similarity between this pair of doughty adventurers and Fritz Leiber's famous characters Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser. I have great personal admiration for Fritz Leiber and his renowned

Swords & Sorcery duo. But, the similarities notwithstanding, I trust that you will also notice the distinct differences between the pairs of protagonists. I myself have been "flattered" too often by imitators to accept aping as a sincere form of flattery. . . .

At the time of this story, Gord is about twenty-one years of age and his barbarian comrade Chert is but a year or two older. They are both typical young adults — not dissimilar to what I was and what you will be/are/were at such an age. Think about and remember that, please. Times, circumstances, and technology change — but people don't. The tale involves fun, adventure, and a sprinkling of the swordplay and sorcerous doings so necessary to any effort in this genre. There occurs herein a learning experience which will stand Our Hero in good stead later in his life. In the meantime, there is some High Excitement to be experienced.

Return with me now to those thrilling days of neverwhen, as heroes set about their derring-do and spell-workers cast their nets of magic, and a certain arch-mage learns that . . .

# At Moonset Blackcat Comes

## A Tale of Gord of Greyhawk

by Gary Gygax

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The last rays of the setting sun washed the dun walls of the city with the color of old blood and cast long shadows on the broad thoroughfares which bisected the New Town. In Greyhawk's Old City, the twisting, narrow lanes and alleys were cloaked in obscuring dimness. Through the gathering dusk hurried honest folk, anxious to be safe behind closed doors, while those of another disposition altogether slunk forth to prey upon the unwary and belated. Encompassing these two extremes, and everything between them, was the nighttime city, that world where bon vivant and criminal, adventurous young nobleman and professional gambler mingled. Along the notorious Strip, pimps and prostitutes competed with tavern hucksters and gambling dens for the clinking coins of rivermen and riffraff, mercenary and petty merchant. The scene

was more genteel and subdued in the upper-class equivalent, that place where High and Garden Quarter adjoined, but the activities were of similar, if more expensive, nature. Fortunes, whether consisting of a few copper commons or a stack of gold orbs, were lost to wheel or dice, drink or drab, no matter if the latter was called a whore or styled herself a courtesan. Into this gloaming walked a pair of young, well-dressed men.

"Where to this night, Gord?" asked the taller of the two.

Gord, a fellow of but moderate height and build, glanced at his companion and smiled. This roguish grin transformed his seemingly average face into a boyishly handsome one, and his white teeth flashed bright in the fading light. Brushing back a stray lock of black, wavy

hair, he replied: "Chert, my friend, tonight we visit the Foreign Quarter!"

"Why there?" Chert demanded. "There's more action and prettier women just nearby!" he exclaimed, waving one of his massive arms vaguely toward the flaring torches which illuminated the elegance of the establishments of Fortune Street and the other byways of the fashionable upper portion of New Town.

"But last night you nearly killed that snot-nosed rake — Lord Fradel's scion, as I recall — when you caught him cheating at dice. If we are seen in these parts again soon, do you think that some band of his henchmen won't fall upon us with murderous intent?"

"So? Such twits as Fradel's whelp can muster will be no threat to us!" shot back the lately sophisticated barbarian. Considering Chert's towering, six-foot, six-inch frame, bulging muscles, and weapons skill, his claim was unquestionably true — even without the commensurate sword and dagger work of his comrade to support his contention.

Gord looked fondly at his friend again, measuring him from the top of his curly, light brown head of hair, already showing signs of its usual disarray, down to his thick legs encased in leather boots of the latest design popular with the elite of Greyhawk. "You appear civilized, Chert, but it is only a veneer! We must be regarded as boon companions and moneyed sports, not brawling killers. You'd soon have us on the wrong side of society, rightly or not. How then would we practice our livelihood?"

Glowering, Chert snapped: "A pox on society! Who needs those fops and dandified pretenders? We still have gold from the sale of those gems we took from the catoboligne demon guarding the cairn — and when that's gone, we can easily take what we need from those soft, simpering fools who think themselves bladesmen and dangerous opponents."

"Perhaps," Gord countered, "but do not pass them all off too lightly, for there are indeed fine swordsmen amongst those you term fops, albeit masquerading as urbane, sophisticated courtiers." Gord paused to direct his comrade toward the desired destination, then continued: "Besides which, there are also artful thieves and black-hearted assassins within that crowd, too — not to mention the hard-bitten mercenary fighters who serve those very ones you pass off so easily."

Chert grumbled but made no resistance to being steered to the place that his friend had said was to be tonight's area of adventure. The pair soon came to a dimly lit tavern just within the precincts of that portion of Greyhawk specified for those not claiming to be citizens of the free city. Entrance to the Foreign Quarter was not difficult, but soon the gates would be shut and barred, sealing off the place until morning came. Escaping the place at night would be impossible, save by climbing over the thirty-foot-high wall or passing under it by means of some secret tunnel. Both were certainly possible for the duo to achieve, so neither adventurer gave the matter a second thought.

To his credit, Chert did not bellow out an order immediately when he walked through the doorway into the tavern. But when the ostler inquired as to his preference, the barbarian's response belied his cultured appearance.

"Strong ale!" he rumbled in his deep voice. "And a brace of those fat ducks I see turning on the spit!" He punctuated the order by slamming his fist down on a heavy oaken table, hard enough to make the table jump.

Somewhat ashen-faced, the proprietor turned and hurriedly asked Gord: "And you, sir?"

"Keoghish amber — the oldest vintage you have," Gord replied mildly but with a wolfish smile. "Capon roasted golden, with crisp skin, and galda fruit and ripe cheese after."

The ostler scuttled away as if he had hot embers in his breeks, and the sight was enough to break Chert's dark mood into peals of deep, ringing laughter. "Ahh," he sighed, rubbing his huge, calloused palms together briskly in anticipation of the coming repast. "A bite of food and a sip of frothy brew, and I'll be ready for anything — even such devious plots as you hatch, Little Man!"

Gord's hand darted out, slapped the barbarian lightly across his surprised face, and returned to lie flat on the table before Chert could twitch a muscle. "Little man?" he shot back. "Slender, certainly, not a great tub of bearguts disguised as a human! Normal-sized, not a hulking ogre! And far too quick and clever for the likes of you to defend against, I agree — but not little!"

Their drinks arrived just then, turning Chert's good-natured and tolerant expression into a broad smile of pleasure. With a single, swift motion, the brawny fellow hoisted the bumper and quaffed its contents in a long gulp. Chert's smoothness and speed belied the insults which Gord had just heaped upon him, and he knew it. "More ale, *quickly!*" he shouted after the retreating ostler as he banged the empty vessel down on the old, stained planks of the trestle.

\* \* \*

"This place is new to me, Gord," murmured Chert as they approached a narrow building five storeys in height. The sign that hung above its iron-bound portal showed a golden ship surmounted by three silver coronets on a deep blue field.

"The Ship and Crowns?" Gord's question was purely rhetorical, for he immediately went on: "I frequented this place occasionally in my younger days — I was known as the Grand Count then. . . . Did I ever tell you about the time I was impersonating a Velunese knight? I called myself Sir Margus —"

"Countless times!" the big barbarian interjected. "Just tell me why we come to the . . . Ship and Crowns . . . this night."

"It is a place much frequented by wealthy merchants, ship's captains, traders, and even slumming noblemen. It has gorgeous serving wenches, the best of potables — even that new fiery distillation called whiskey — and most challenging games."

"Games? Bah!" Chert replied in disgust. "Why come here for gambling when the whole of New Town abounds with gaming establishments?"

The dark-eyed young adventurer gave his comrade a look which bespoke pity for someone hopelessly retarded in intellect, and muttered something about the correlation

between mighty muscles and minute mind. Gord pulled a crown-shaped key from his pocket, inserted it into the heavy door's great lock, and entered the place. Chert stepped in behind him, amazed in spite of himself at the sight thus revealed.

Instead of the interior of some typical common house, he saw a chamber more befitting an aristocrat's private study than a drinking establishment. The floor was clean and polished where thick rugs of exotic origin did not hide its surface. The paneled walls gleamed, the polished wood being replaced by plastered and painted wall upward from about waist height. These latter surfaces were covered with artistic works — tapestries, trophies, carved ivory pieces, paintings of exceptional workmanship. Gleaming brass lanterns and candelabra held thick tapers, the soft light from which made the whole place warm and comfortable. Perhaps a half-dozen chairs and two small tables were scattered about the room, and there wasn't a single person in sight.

"Not a very popular place," Chert muttered while continuing to gaze at the surroundings.

"Wait and learn," Gord replied simply.

They stood, in relaxed postures, and in another moment a tall girl with long, blond hair and garments of diaphanous silk appeared from a draped archway at the back of the chamber. "May I ask my lords' pleasure this evening?" she offered. "Do you wish jolly company and merrymaking? Beauty and quiet to sample marvelous

potions? Or perhaps you have come to contest in challenges of tactics and wit?"

Her last query was somewhat hesitant as her gaze took in the towering barbarian's substance, for his stance and bearing revealed those aspects of his nature which finery and dress could not hide. Here, she thought, is one suited for berserk battle, the wild hunt, or questing after dragons not the sedate pursuit of victory on a game table.

Chert's massive arm looped itself easily around the lovely, milk-white shoulders of the pretty lass. "I say that my pleasure will be best served, girl, by you and I going to some secluded nook to sample those marvelous potions you mentioned!"

"Oh, no, sir!" the girl exclaimed as she slipped easily from his grasp with a fluid motion born of long practise. "My station is here, but I will have you escorted above to the Masters' Cabin, or the Leisure of Lords — the two pleasure salons at the top — if that is your desire. . . ."

"No!" Gord managed to insert the word even as his barbarian companion was opening his mouth to assent happily to the suggestion. "We have come to sample your best spirits, and enliven our minds with contests of the intellect — not to wallow in carnal combat of the delicate sort."

Chert's mouth closed, then opened again, and he was about to voice a strong protest, but the girl spoke first. "Most certainly, sirs." With that, she drew aside the curtains and ushered them through a short hall into the inter-



rior of the establishment. "Please ascend the stair. Games and contests of skill are featured in all of the rooms of the second storey."

Gord was already mounting the steps as she spoke, and his brawny companion had little choice but to follow. They climbed past a floor where the thick, plush-draped entrance only slightly muffled the sounds of ribald singing and laughter. Again Chert tried to distract Gord from his stated goal, but the slender fellow never paused in his progress upward. Cursing softly under his breath, the barbarian stamped after Gord's retreating back. Games of skill, indeed!

"Here, now!" exclaimed Gord when he reached the second storey. "In here are the things to challenge the mind, sharpen the wit, and test one's true mental mettle!"

Glumly unconvinced of such wonders, Chert shook his head and refused to show the slightest trace of enthusiasm. Gord led him through several rooms to a place where cushioned chairs and soft divans surrounded oddly shaped and patterned tables. The patrons were of mixed sort, diverse race, and both sexes. All were obviously wealthy. Gord and Chert took their ease on a long divan, and they were no sooner seated than another maid, this one an auburn-haired beauty of dazzling smile and extraordinary figure, was before them.

"What may I bring you, sirs?" she asked with a curtsey which revealed a breathtaking display of rounded bosom.

Chert was reaching, but Gord was quicker and caught his companion's great paw before it attained its desired destination. At the same time, he hastily responded, "We shall each sample your famous whiskey potion."

"Bring a keg of the stuff!" Chert demanded, truculent over the foiling, once again, of his imagined sport.

There were a number of others in the room, sitting around one table or another in pairs, trios, or quartets, evidently engaged in various forms of the games that Gord was so eager to indulge in. At the noise of the commotion caused by Chert, several looked up to scowl — a bearded Kettite in orange turban, a fellow wearing Tenhite dress and obviously of Flannish race, and a burly ship's captain, among others — and hastily returned their eyes to the tables before them at the sight of the giant who glared back at them. This one certainly sought some more active form of contest than any here cared to offer on this night!

After sampling a draught of the distillation, Chert swilled the whole contents of his beaker down and poured some more from the large earthenware jug the wench had brought to them. "Urrruph!" he belched, then smacked his lips, sighed with real pleasure, and, "The stuff is tasty . . . and I like the way it burns all the way down the gullet. This . . . whiskey . . . fairly makes a man glow!" he finished loudly. Nobody looked up this time, much to the disappointment of the barbarian.

Gord, who had been watching a game involving rune-inscribed stones, dice, pathways, pits, and walls, turned angrily toward his comrade. "Godsdamnit, Chert," he growled in a half-whisper. "Can't you control yourself for once? Just because we aren't gambling, wenching, or brawling, you think yourself deprived and mistreated. Well, tonight I am going to do something I like to do — enjoy something cerebral, not full of physical action or

violence. If you don't wish to be uplifted, then why don't you just bugger off?"

"All right," his friend said flatly and with finality. "This is bullshit. See you later." And without another word Chert arose and stumped off.

Gord was sorry he'd been so sharp then, for he enjoyed the barbarian's company, and a little coaxing would have certainly mellowed him to the point where he would have actually enjoyed the new atmosphere and the gaming. Worse still, he had taken the jug when he left! Well, no help for it now. Chert and whiskey were gone. Gord decided to make the best of it. A few coins brought a fresh flask, and Gord began strolling here and there to watch the contests going on and to look for a possible opponent in one or another of the games.

Although the games were often tense matches, Gord found little enjoyment or excitement in being a mere spectator. He wished to pit himself against some worthy opponent in a contest of strategy and skill. But all here were already partnered, and the role of observer palled upon the young man. After going through several of the many rooms, Gord came to a small, secluded study which had only one, three-layered table, flanked by a pair of overstuffed armchairs with high backs and protruding sides. He was about to move on, thinking the place deserted, when a voice called to him.

"Your pardon, good sir, but do you seek someone to challenge?"

"What?" Gord spun, startled at the unexpected sound of a voice coming from a place he thought deserted. He took two wary steps into the chamber, angling his path so that he could see the far chair and the figure seated in it. "Oh, yes indeed!" he continued, adopting a casual tone to cover his surprise. He moved farther into the room and surveyed the strange-looking table. "I have played at *Chatraj* before, but this board is far different . . ." His voice trailed off as he realized how different it was.

"Chess has many forms," the other fellow purred as he held aloft the ornately carved figure of the scarlet king, "but all are similar, too. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Rexfelis — no mean player, to be sure, but one who is quite willing to offer instruction to another devoted to such pursuits. Will you accept the challenge . . . ?" he added as he stood and offered his long-fingered hand in greeting.

"I am Gord, and happily I accept, Rexfelis, so generous an offer." Gord shook the man's hand, assessing his new opponent as he did so. Rexfelis — an unusual name, Gord mused — was just about his own build and only slightly taller. That explained how he could go unnoticed by one so sharp-eyed as Gord, hidden as he was by the great chair. Of indeterminate age, the fellow appeared highly intelligent and seemed to move with the same cat-like grace which Gord so prided himself upon. There was some similarity in their looks, too, for this Rexfelis had dark hair and eyes, a fine-featured face, and long, sinewy limbs. Instead of Gord's olive skin, however, Rexfelis had a very pale complexion, which made his black eyes seem large and somewhat startling. On the whole, though, Gord found himself liking the fellow and feeling immediately comfortable with his company.

"Allow me to provide us with refreshment, sir," said Gord, "while you instruct me in the intricacies of. . . . What is it you call this game?"

"Agreed!" said Rexfelis with a merry laugh. "And I call this Dragonchess. It is easy to learn, but difficult to master — much as a woman!"

Soon a pair of crystal glasses filled with tawny liquid were gracing the sides of the game table, as Gord's newfound comrade explained the form of the board and its many pieces: "The upper board is clear, you see, with checks of palest blue and faint white. The whole represents the air above us, and the element as well. On it are ranked the sylphs, the griff, and each of our terrible dragons. Next, the transparent layer of light green and amber squares is the board which represents the land surface — the mundane world, as it were. Note the warriors filling the second ranks of each side, and behind them stand the oliphants, unicorns, heroes, and thieves — some prefer to call them elven thieves, or simply elves, but I say that's begging the question. The middle board also houses the singular pieces — cleric, mage, king, and paladin — or assassin, if you attribute evil to a game.

"Below the middle board is the underworld region, that place of caverns and caves. It is checkered deep brown and red, you will notice. There are positioned the dwarves, the basilisks, and the counterpart to the dragon high above, the elemental. I shall show you how to array these forces, demonstrate the movement of each piece, and then perhaps we may begin with a few instructional games?"

Gord readily assented, and after some time he was playing rather well if he did say, or actually think, so himself. Although he lost all of the first six games played, each new contest saw him lasting longer and more effectively guarding and attacking.

"Excellent!" Rexfelis exclaimed as Gord moved his basilisk into a position where it froze movement of the pale man's king. "You'd have me beaten next move with that gold thief, but for this . . . checkmate!" Rexfelis finished, moving his remaining griffon with a swooping motion to a square diagonally below its upper-board position. There it captured Gord's cleric and threatened his king. Checkmate? Yes, blast it! The griffon was protected by the scarlet mage, and the game was lost indeed.

"I almost had you that time," Gord said with frustration and a trace of bitterness.

Rexfelis looked somewhat smug and superior as he sat back and stretched languidly. He cocked an eyebrow at Gord and, with an unwinking gaze fixed upon the young man, said, "Perhaps it is the hour, and you are tired — although you do seem to have remarkable skill at learning. Well . . . another day?"

"No!" responded Gord, emphatically but still, he hoped, politely. "I can manage an eighth game — and this time I suggest you be on guard, sir, for I intend to win!" This was neither bluff nor braggadocio. Gord was an expert player at other forms of the game, and despite the difficulties of this more complex version he thought he had sufficient knowledge of the positions of opening and middle play to take advantage of weaknesses he had detected in his opponent's game. Whatever the case, he and Rexfe-

lis played an eighth match, and after much maneuvering and exchange of pieces Gord managed to corner and checkmate Rexfelis's king. It was most satisfying!

"Now I must confess that I myself grow weary," said Rexfelis after graciously congratulating the victor. "I bid you goodnight."

"But you cannot leave so soon," said Gord. "The night is hardly past midpoint, if that. Let us try a single, last game. . . ." But Rexfelis was shaking his head and arising, so Gord added hastily, "Stay, friend, and I shall supply us both with a stimulating beverage and a tasty snack. Thus shall our bodies and our minds be refreshed — all enjoyable and at no cost to you, dear sir!"

"Time . . . time is the price," said Rexfelis, but then he hesitated, halfway between rising and sitting. Then he seemed to firm his resolve, for he stood fully and said, "The offer is kind, and it tempts me, but the prospect of a ninth game fails to excite my weary brain sufficiently."

"A wager, then?" asked Gord, desperately desiring a last game to verify to himself his newly learned skill at Dragonchess.

"What sort of a stake?" the somber-clad man inquired, looking at Gord with intensity. "I am a gambling man, and that does interest me."

Gord was always alert to such reactions, for they were the mark of sharpers, professional gamblers, and thieves. Being a master of both arts himself, Gord scrutinized Rexfelis with new respect and suspicion. Was this man hustling him? No, the adventurous young man thought, this was unlikely. Gord knew virtually every thief in the city (although few of them knew him by the name of Gord). This fellow was no thief. His bearing was aristocratic. He was a noble, certainly, although one of strange sort. He wore the finest garments Gord had seen inside or outside any palace, and his heavy gold jewelry was adorned with gems. Certainly he was no sharper seeking an easy victim. Perhaps he was one of those afflicted with a passion for wagering. . . .

"You choose the stakes we contest for, sir. I too am a gambler," Gord replied, his eyes locked on his adversary's.

The pale man sat down again, smiled, and said, "Let us make a small wager, but a dear one nonetheless. I admire that cat's-eye ring you wear on your left hand. Let us play for that — against this carnelian amulet I wear at my breast."

Gord's first impulse was to decline, for he prized the ring highly and suspected that it had some hidden dweomer yet unrevealed to him. But before he could object, Rexfelis spoke on: "Yes, yes, I know it is a most wondrously valuable ring, but I assure you this amulet is its superior. I shall tell you what power each has, if you win."

As Gord was on the verge of standing up and saying no, the mocking tone and expression of the black-clad Rexfelis suddenly filled him with a burning desire to wipe away the mockery with an ignominious defeat, and he was further infused with a power and confidence he often felt when he thought fortune was smiling upon him. "The stake shall be as you say," he proclaimed. "Let us begin!"

Gord's golden pieces went to the attack quickly — but just as quickly they were countered, and all too soon the

scarlet components of his adversary's force were marshalled to bear upon him. Rexfelis's red forces above, below, and on the board of the mundane were pressing home an inexorable attack, and some of the nuances of the position were not apparent to Gord.

"Careless," remarked Gord as he removed the scarlet dragon with his hero. Both men were playing quickly, and Rexfelis was losing more pieces than Gord was.

"Check," replied his foe matter-of-factly as he made his following move.

The threat was from a scarlet hero, and Gord was shocked to find that his king had no safe retreat on high or middle board. He moved his monarch to the underworld board without comment. Rexfelis sacrificed two more pieces, leaving Gord no option but to accept both captures, and then broke the silence with three chilling words: "It is over."

Gord stared at the position with sudden understanding. He had been maneuvered into a situation where his king could not return to the middle board. Two more forced moves, and it was checkmate.

"I agree," Gord said tonelessly. "I believe this is now yours, sir . . ." he added, removing the gold ring set with a cabochon cat's-eye chrysoberyl and extending it across the table.

"Be not so hasty, my friend," Rexfelis said with a small smile. "Perhaps there is another wager you can agree to one that will enable you to retain the ring and gain the amulet as well!"

"I have been gulled once," Gord said sourly, "but I am ever a fool. Say on."

The black-garbed man couldn't help smiling more broadly at Gord's cynical assessment of his own situation. "Perhaps you do face a foe with an advantage," he said. "I know that you have a certain repute . . . Blackcat."

Although it was said softly, Gord jumped at the mention of that name — his appellation as a burglar! "Why name me thus?" he retorted briskly. "I am not the elusive thief you identify, one who is sought high and low as the bane of the city's wealthy."

"Are you not? Well, no matter," Rexfelis said. "The reward from the wager is for Gord, although Blackcat might succeed at its challenge more easily. What say you?"

Gord met the fellow's steady stare with his own. Of all the people in Greyhawk, Gord had thought that only Chert and he himself knew that he was the burglar called Blackcat — the name coined by victims who had caught a glimpse of his inky form disappearing over a rooftop, running along an impossibly narrow ledge, leaping distances not thought possible for normal folk. Yet, even though Rexfelis also had this information, Gord saw no malice or devious intent in his face, only a cool, quizzical detachment, as though he were assessing Gord's courage and daring. "Name the terms," Gord said evenly in reply to the challenging stare.

"In an hour the moon will set. In another two, the rosy orb of the sun will push its way heavenward. In that span, during those two hours of great darkness, a bold and daring thief might enter the Tower of Rigello and bring back . . . a small item."

"Rigello is an arch-mage — and one of vicious disposition, I am told," Gord replied slowly.

"True on both counts," Rexfelis agreed. "The one who dares to enter his domain would have to be exceptionally skilled, well-prepared, and lucky."

"What is this small item to be stolen?"

"Not stolen," corrected the dark-clad man. "Let us say recovered — returned to its rightful possessor. It is a statuette of a tiger carved from a single piece of jacinth, inlaid with bands of polished, black coral, and bearing eyes of perfect emerald. A masterwork, a nonesuch, and stolen from me by Rigello!" The pale man hissed the last words with such hate that Gord drew back reflexively.

"What preparation is needed?" asked Gord, thoughts of thievery coming into his head as he implicitly agreed to undertake the endeavor. "And what reward for the . . . return of the property?"

Rexfelis smiled contentedly, correctly assuming that he had found his man, and bent closer to Gord. "Harken now," he said, drawing forth a folded parchment. "I will show you the plan of the tower and suggest what might be useful in penetrating its defenses. My quarters are nearby, and therein is stored all you will need in the way of gear and armaments."

"The reward you spoke of — is it only my ring and that amulet?"

Rexfelis grinned broadly at this, showing his small, slightly pointed teeth. "You refer to *my* ring, of course, and the amulet, and you suggest that these are insufficient for the risk? Ahh, my young friend, if you but knew. . . . Nevertheless, I will bargain, for the hazards are most perilous, admittedly, and you are the sole hope I have. If you return here with the statuette before the sun clears the horizon, then the ring, the amulet, and one hundred gold orbs will await. Do we have agreement on that?"

"Let us make haste," said Gord, with a note of urgency in his voice, as his way of assenting. "The moon sails toward its setting even now!"

After a few more minutes of intense conversation to make final plans, both men left the Ship and Crowns rapidly, but without obvious haste. Gord was uncertain about what he had agreed to, but felt he had little choice. If this man was indeed certain that Gord was the thief called Blackcat, a single word would suffice to sign Gord's death warrant. How Rexfelis came by his knowledge, Gord would determine later. Now, however, was the time for action. Regaining his ring, plus the acquisition of both the amulet and a stack of gold, was more than sufficient cause for him to accept the challenge — and besides, this was a test befitting the greatest burglar Greyhawk had ever known.

"Here, down this lane and up the stairs at its end," said Rexfelis shortly after the two had left the building. "There is my apartment and the equipage you will need."

\* \* \*

When Rexfelis showed Gord the map of the place, he had indicated where sentries and guards were likely to be posted, and had warned him where traps and alarms might be encountered. This information, just as the pale

man's knowledge of Gord's alter-persona of Blackcat, had been obtained by a mysterious means which Rexfelis had not revealed despite some prodding by Gord. But it was accurate, no doubt, for Gord discovered a flint-eyed sentry lurking in the shadows of the wall surrounding Rigello's dwelling, just where he had been told to expect one.

That watcher, a hard-bitten mercenary judging by his bearing and garb, was the first to die. A thrust through the neck, quick and clean, and Gord passed quickly to the garden beyond. There he encountered another guard. This one, according to Rexfelis, was the chief henchman of Rigello, an assassin known as Deathspider.

Gord came upon him as the hunched, spidery man was descending the short, outer stair leading down to the tower's base. He had heard of Deathspider even before his conversation with Rexfelis, and as he struck the cloaked figure from behind with shortsword and dagger, he whispered, "Here, Spider, is venom of the sort you like to inject!"

Despite the two fell blows, the crabbed figure managed to turn to face his assailant. Long, narrow blade in hand, the assassin stood, tottering, yet unwilling to die. He opened his mouth, trying to expel a cry of warning to his master. But Gord struck again before Spiderdeath could make a response in word or deed. The burglar plied his weapons swiftly and surely — sword into the open mouth, dagger through the black heart — and this second dose of venom was fatal. Gord took a moment to hide the corpse and then began ascending the same stair his victim had just come down. When that short pathway expired, he dug in with fingers and toes and negotiated the rough-hewn outer wall itself. It would have been a treacherous journey, to say the least, for someone not so well trained. But for Blackcat, the climb required little more effort than a stroll down the boulevard.

He stopped and braced himself on a narrow ledge just below a window. Then, at the sound of approaching footsteps, he brought a short rope from beneath his outer garb and uncoiled it, holding the base of the noose close to his body.

The sentry never knew what happened. One moment he was idly peering out the window. Then, in the same instant that he glanced down and spied Gord lurking below, the noose came up and tightened around his neck. The rope choked off his cry, and with a flick of the wrist Gord pulled the guard out and away, sending him pitching downward to the stone pavement many feet below. After the solid thud of his victim's impact, Gord heard no further sound, assuring him that the incident had gone unnoticed by other patrollers.

"Taking the silver of a spell-binder can jeopardize your health," he murmured over his shoulder, glancing back at the broken form below. Then he hoisted himself up and through the window, into a small, unlit room. "Rigello's chambers are just above," he said softly to himself, "and there are bound to be guards — but three fewer now than before." With that, he crept across the room to where a faint, reddish light limned the narrow doorway separating it from the central stairwell.

Dark and silent as a shadow, he moved upward on the worn spiral of stone which pierced the heart of the ancient

keep. Clad in high, soft boots of ebon hue, shirt and hose of like color, with black leather jack and a hooded cape as black as the rest, face swathed so that only the eyes showed, and earlike protrusions mimicking a feline head, Blackcat was more than a creature of the night — he was part of the night.

Two times during his ascent he slipped past watching guards stationed in chambers adjacent to the stairway. Then one final twist of the stairs, a deft step over a flagstone trapped to release a many-spiked grill of iron suspended by a strong chain above the entry, and Gord was within the sanctum sanctorum of the arch-mage Rigello. By unsheathing his shortsword, a weapon of powerful dweomer, he was able to see the chamber as well as if it had been illuminated by a dozen candles.

"There you are, little tiger," he said softly as his gaze came to rest upon a statuette. The green eyes of the figurine seemed to wink knowingly at him as Gord moved with utmost stealth across the floor to stand before the pedestal upon which it rested. Gord reached for the exquisitely carved figure, planning to thrust it within the small pouch he carried just for that purpose, when a sixth sense warned him . . . too late!

He sprang backward, but the glowing sigil which had suddenly burst into life upon the onyx stand seemed to buffet his very brain with a searing beam of radiance. The backward leap ended with a sprawl, and Gord lay helpless on the floor, stunned and barely able to move. The jump had, however, saved his life. Immediately after the jarring light from the magic sigil sprang forth, great bolts of crackling, blue-white energy snapped and spat around the pedestal. Any living thing within six feet of the stand would have been burned to a charred heap by such force. Gord was only vaguely aware of his narrow escape, although his scattered senses could not fail to register the hellish light from the arcing strokes of electricity.

The energy bolts faded and then, in the next instant, the very air of the chamber was rent with inhuman cries of "*Thief! Thief! Thief!*" The noise went on as if it would never end, reverberating throughout the place and reaching every part of the great cylindrical structure.

In the brief pause between each outcry of the disembodied voice, Gord could hear the bellowing of a horn coming from somewhere below him. Both sounds, horrible though they were, actually seemed to help him gather his wits. He shook his head and managed to scramble to his feet in the following few seconds, and then . . .

"Oh, shit!" he exclaimed, for at that very moment bright lights sprang forth from a quartet of hideous masks hung around the walls of the chamber. Rigello was indeed prepared for attempts at burglary! Then the shrill cries of "*Thief!*" ceased as abruptly as they had begun, and although there was still a great noise and confusion audible from below, no legs could be seen descending the stairs from above. If Rigello was indeed higher up in the tower, as Gord suspected, then he had apparently elected to let his traps, his alarms, and his minions dispose of the intruder without entering the fray himself.

Darkness was Gord's only ally, and there would be no darkness again until the masks were disposed of. With a bound, Gord reached the nearest wall where one of the

brightly glowing visages was hung, tore it free, and hurled it through the window. He dashed around the perimeter of the chamber, pulling each mask from its mooring and sending it after the first. When the fourth was disposed of, the room was again in darkness.

"Surrender, thief, and your death will be swift and merciful!"

Gord ignored this sepulchral-voiced command which boomed from somewhere above. Whether this was the voice of Rigello himself, or some form of magical invective, he did not know — and it did not really matter. Now, all his thoughts of gaining the prize were gone. He could not risk another encounter with the crackling energy that he suspected the pedestal would still contain, and he realized that all of his skill would be needed to escape the tower alive.

Just as he was about to bound down the stairway, Gord was brought up short by the sound of something ascending the same passageway. "What the godsdamned devils do we do now?" he murmured to himself.

"Surrender, thief, and I will give you swift death!" the hollow, grating voice boomed out, as if in reply to his question.

"Eat batdung!" Gord cried in response, grabbing a heavy table and sending it crashing down the stone spiral. The sound of its progress stopped suddenly, and a terrible howling roar replaced the rolling thunder of its fall. There followed a splintering sound, and the clatter of small bits of wood falling. Whatever was coming up after him had taken the force of the bronzewood table's downward plunge, torn the thing to flinders, and was again climbing toward him!

The window? Not his first choice — not unless he wished to die, for it was surely the place he would be expected to emerge in his attempt to flee. Then an idea came to him in a flash. Gord vaulted himself up to a ledge near the ceiling and adjacent to the entranceway. There he waited, his enchanted dagger in hand, for his table-smashing foe to appear.

A moment later a huge, glowing blue demon of indeterminate sort appeared in the doorway to the chamber. The thing paused and looked around the chamber for a second or two and then spied Gord crouched upon the nearby ledge, for the moment still out of reach of the squat-bodied monster. As Gord had suspected, the pressure plate in the floor had been neutralized somehow, so that the heavy iron frame with its daggerlike spikes did not drop upon the monster. But . . .

"A poignant climax to your tail!" Gord yelled, swinging his enchanted blade to sever the chain which held the iron grate nearly ten feet above the demon's head. At this sound, the creature's baleful gaze turned directly upward, and it experienced a split-second of stupid amazement before the half-ton of iron struck it. The demon was crushed into a howling, gibbering heap beneath the weight. Gord leaped down from his position near the ceiling, landing full upon the spiked grate. The iron fangs drove more deeply into the malignant fiend, and its corresponding bellow was ear-shattering.

Thanking whoever watched over him for the metal-slicing power of his magical dagger, Gord jumped down

from atop the death-dealing grate and moved noiselessly down the spiral staircase, taking the steps three at a time. As he rounded the final curve before coming to the first landing, he saw a pair of magic-users barring the way, preparing to cast their spells at him. Gord leaped into a somersault from the third step above the landing and vaulted over their heads. His blade lashed out at them from the rear almost before his feet had touched ground, and his first blows struck. The nearer of the two spell-casters screamed and clutched his side, his incantation ruined. In the cramped space of the landing, Gord could not get close enough to the second magic-user for an immediate strike with sword or dagger. His adversary turned, ready to unleash his magic — and at that moment, the other magic-user writhed and lunged into the path of the magic's force. In an eye-blink, the screaming and writhing stopped as the form of the wounded dweomercrafter was turned into porous, gray stone.

"What are you?" demanded the shocked wizard in an attempt to distract his enemy as he groped for a wand amongst the folds of his robes.

As his answer, Gord drew a knife from his belt and hurled it. But the throw was a hurried one, and the blade only succeeded in cutting a bloody channel across the spell-caster's cheek. The wizard managed to draw forth his ivory baton as Gord moved around the petrified body and thrust with his sword, missing but momentarily throwing the wizard off balance. Then, as Gord pulled forth his dagger, the magic-user's wand spat forth a bluish beam. It passed within a hairsbreadth of Gord's leg, and he felt that member grow heavy and numb for just an instant. He lunged at the spell-caster, scoring with both blades but not inflicting a mortal wound. The wizard backed away, circling around the form of his petrified companion, trying to buy time until he could ply his wand again. Gord ruined that plan by pushing the petrified form toward his foe. The sorcerer moved out of the way nimbly enough, but lost his chance to counterattack. The statue toppled over, struck the paved floor, and broke into bits. At this, the wizard voiced a cry of horrified rage, but this did not deter Gord; he closed upon his foe again, sword and dagger flashing. The wizard leaped backward to avoid the weapons, and with a scream tumbled out of sight down the stairway.

"Another avenue closed," Gord panted. He knew that he had to get away immediately now — otherwise, guards from below and arch-mage from above would soon crush him in a fatal vice. He moved through a nearby archway, and in the room beyond saw a window. He pulled forth a flat spike of metal, hammered it into place on the window ledge between two stones, and leaned out to survey the area.

"Here! Below me! I see him, master!" This cry was punctuated with a buzzing sound, and Gord felt the wind of an arrow's passage as the missile streaked down from above, barely missing his head. He ignored the threat, pulled out a thin cord that was looped around his waist, and leaned farther out the window, holding onto the small grapnel fastened to one end of the line. He swung the hook over his head once, twice, and then loosed the line. The grapnel sped out and down, and Gord jerked himself



back into the room just as another arrow splintered itself on the ledge.

Gord tugged on the other end of the line with all his strength, and was glad to find that he could pull it taut. Hoping that the far end was truly secured, he ran the end he held through the eye of the spike, tied it fast, and made sure his weapons were firmly sheathed. He could hear the sound of feet pounding up the stairs, only a second or two away from the landing. "Now or never," he told himself, and launched himself out the window.

As he leaped, he caught hold of the line with both hands. This was the critical moment: Would the grapnel come free? Should that happen, he would be battered against the tower side, fully exposed to attack from above, and would finally drop directly into the clutches of waiting enemies below. The cord sagged — and Gord began dropping!

But, in the space of a single, terror-filled heartbeat, his fall was stopped short. He managed to retain his grip as the line jerked taut again. Gord swung his legs up and hooked them around the thin rope, loosened the grip of his fingers slightly, and slid rapidly away from the tower, gravity pulling him down and the lifeline carrying him outward. A flock of shafts flew around him as he began his descent, but none struck their target. And his chance of escaping increased with his velocity. He was invisible, black against black, and traveling swiftly. The cord took

him into the branches of a tree beyond the wall surrounding Rigello's tower. Scant seconds after beginning the trip, he grabbed a limb of the tree and lithely jumped to the ground. He could hear the uproar in and around the tower, and with a quick glance over his shoulder he saw a troop of men-at-arms scurrying out of the gate in the wall. Gord, however, was already a hundred paces distant and gaining speed. So much for success, he thought with a twinge of disappointment . . . but at least Blackcat had kept his life.

\* \* \*

For whatever reason, Gord admitted himself into the Ship and Crowns some quarter-hour before sunrise. The club was quiet now, most of its clientele having long since departed. Waving aside the tired little maid who came to see who was entering at such an hour, Gord headed directly for the little alcove two floors above.

"It is a pleasure to see you," Rexfelis murmured, barely glancing up from his study of the Dragonchess game before him.

"You bastard," Gord hissed. "The place was a death trap — you knew I couldn't succeed, didn't you?"

"But you *did* succeed, in a fashion, anyway," the pale man replied with a contented smile.

Gord sneered at him. "If by being alive I have won,

then I agree. I admit failure, though, in gaining the object you required of me — and I must also demand satisfaction from you for what you set me up for!"

Rexfelis waved languidly and said, "Why be in such a hurry to lose what you have fought so hard to retain? To challenge me is to court death more certainly than you did in your assault on the tower of Rigello. Wait and hear me out," he drawled as Gord started to interject something uncomplimentary.

"You could have succeeded, but the odds were long, so I took the trouble to support the mission, as it were, by insinuating myself into the tower just after you yourself entered. I witnessed the whole affair, and I must say you did exceptional . . . work. In any event, during the confusion which followed your escape, I picked up the prize — see?" Rexfelis drew the carved jacinth from beneath his tunic and displayed it proudly for a moment, then returned it to a position next to his heart.

"Impossible!" cried Gord. "No one could have beaten me back to this place!"

"But obviously I did," said Rexfelis. "That is of no consequence. Here is the ring — yours again — but I shall keep my amulet since you didn't meet the terms of our wager."

Gord caught the casually tossed cat's-eye, placed it in his belt for safekeeping, and then looked darkly at the seated man. "I think this is insufficient under the circumstances, Rexfelis. A matter of honor —"

"Don't even think about showing your sword," interrupted Rexfelis. The words were biting and hard, but tempered by the rest of what he said. "The hundred gold orbs, and my favor as well, are yours in addition to the ring — but not because I wish to buy you off, rest assured! Call it a whim; better still, regard it as a gesture of respect for the talents of one daring to call himself Blackcat. Agreed?"

"I have been used!"

"Have you not done so with others?" the pale man countered.

Gord found himself hard pressed to reply to that. And, after all, he had his life, his ring, a small fortune in gold, and the memories of one hell of an adventure. Why, he had to honestly ask himself, should he be demanding a duel to the death with this man?

"Not only talented, but wise as well," Rexfelis said smoothly as Gord sank into the chair opposite him.

"What powers has my ring?" asked the young thief, curious to know this long-kept secret.

"No, Gord-Blackcat, that I will not tell you — not this night, anyway. The sun is nearly risen, and I must away now. Another time, and we shall meet again, perhaps. For now, farewell!"

"Wait!" Gord called out as Rexfelis arose. "Where will we meet? When?"

"That, dear fellow, is dependent upon the whim of the fates — and your need."

Gord felt absolutely stupid, but he could not help blurting out yet another question: "My need?"

Rexfelis smiled, spoke, and disappeared. The words seemed to linger after him: "Your need to invoke the Lord of Cats. . . ."

\* \* \*

"Have a hell of a good time playing games?" Chert demanded, grumpily from his bed. Gord's none-too-quiet entry into their mutual quarters had awakened him from a sleep made restless by too much ale and whiskey.

"Games?" Gord said before he could stop himself, wondering why it was that all he could do this night was reply with questions. "Of course, games at the Ship and Crowns. . . ."

"What an asshole," the barbarian muttered sleepily, turning over to resume his slumber. "Don't you even remember what you did all night?"

"Yes, yes indeed, friend," Gord answered. "And I think I'll remember the lessons I learned at playing for a long time to come. Here's what happened —"

"Would you shut the hell up?" roared the irate Chert. "Just because you sat on your ass and amused yourself doesn't mean I did. I had one hell of an active time — not pushing little pieces around . . . or not exactly, anyway. I don't give a hop in hell what strategies you used — I want to sleep!"

"Fine. Go to sleep," Gord sighed. Some things, he mused, were perhaps not meant to be shared, no matter how close the comradeship.

FROM THE DUSTY TOMES OF POWERFUL SORCERERS  
IT COMES AT LAST!  
UNEARTHED ARCANA

## UNEARTHED ARCANA

# New rules for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by Gary Gygax



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# DRAGONCHESS

by Gary Gygax

The DRAGONCHESS™ game is a fantasy-based variation of chess, in which the object of the game (as in standard chess) is to checkmate the opposing King. An understanding of the rules of chess is helpful in order to understand how DRAGONCHESS is played.

The playing surface for DRAGONCHESS is a three-tiered structure of rectangular boards, with each board composed of a grid 12 squares wide and 8 squares deep. The squares are alternately colored light and dark (or other color tones that contrast with each other), configured so that a light-colored square is in the near right-hand corner when the board is viewed from the longer side. The *upper board* represents the air, the *middle board* the land, and the *lower board* the subterranean world. To simulate the various environments, it is suggested that the squares on the upper board be colored light blue and white; on the middle board, light green and amber; and on the lower board, red and brown. Each board is the starting place for pieces particular to its environment; some pieces cannot move up or down off the board they begin on, but other pieces can travel between two or even all three boards. The opposing forces are designated as Gold and Scarlet, with Gold always moving first.

## Setting up

At the start of the game, each player's pieces are positioned as shown in the accompanying diagram. Each force on the upper board consists of six Sylphs, two Griffons, and one Dragon. On the middle board, each side possesses one King, one Mage, one Paladin, one Cleric, two Heroes, two Unicorns, two Oliphants, and twelve Warriors. Each side's force on the lower board is made up of six Dwarves, two Basilisks, and one Elemental. In all, there are 42 pieces per side, or a total of 84 pieces in the game.

## Notation and terminology

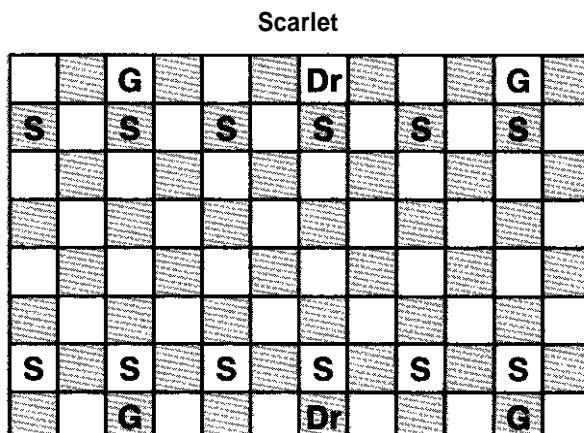
In the following descriptions of how pieces move and capture, squares on the board(s) are described in algebraic notation, with files (columns) labeled "a" through "I" reading left to right from Gold's viewpoint, and ranks (rows) numbered 1 (nearest to the Gold player) through 8 (nearest to the Scarlet player). A numerical prefix of 1 (upper board), 2 (middle board), or 3 (lower board) designates the board on which a certain square is located. Thus, "1a1" is the square in the near left-hand corner of the upper board, as viewed from the Gold player's position, and "3I8" is the square in the far right-hand corner of the lower board. Each piece is identified by the initial letter of its name ("S" for Sylph, etc.) except for the Dragon, which is identified by "Dr" to distinguish it from a Dwarf piece.

In all other respects, movement and capture notation is essentially the same as for standard chess. A full description of this notation is given near the end of this text.

Standard chess pieces are referred to frequently in the descriptions of how DRAGONCHESS pieces move and capture; in such cases, their names (king, rook, etc.) are not capitalized, while the names of DRAGONCHESS pieces are always capitalized. In the diagrams of movement that accompany the description of each piece, "M" designates a square that a piece can move into, if that square is unoccupied (*i.e.*, no capture is permitted); "C" designates a square that can be occupied only if a capture is involved; and "X" designates a square that can be occupied either by a capturing or a non-capturing move.

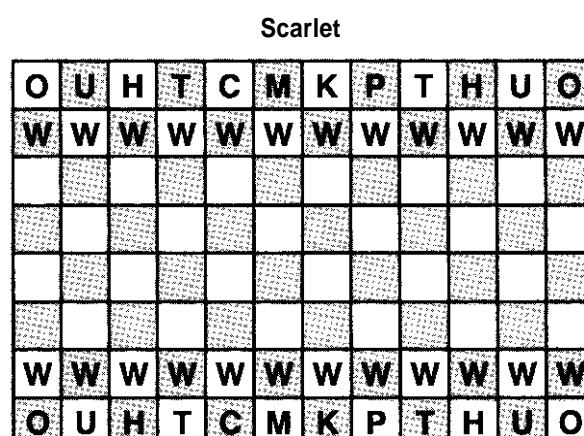
Because many pieces can move in three dimensions, nomenclature for movement between squares has been standardized as follows: "horizontal" refers to a side-to-side move as viewed by the player

Starting position, upper board



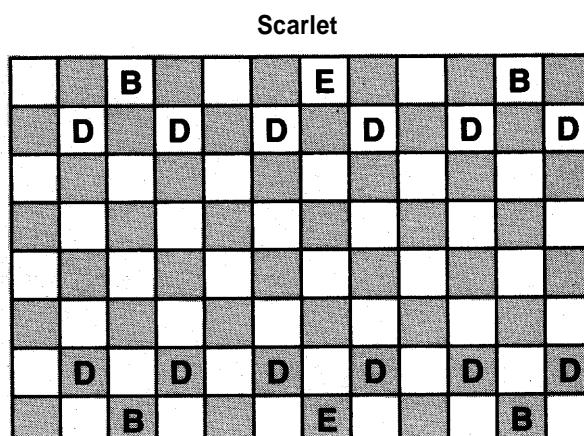
Gold

Starting position, middle board



Gold

Starting position, lower board



Gold

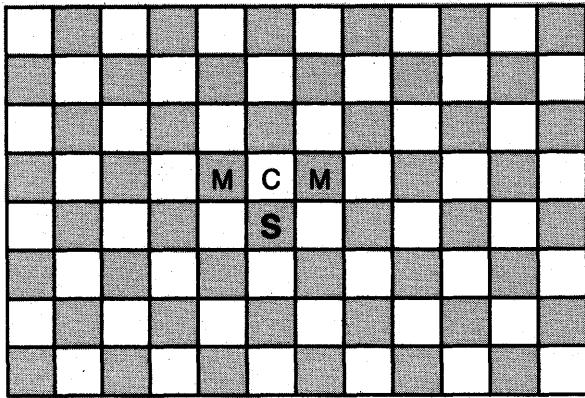
moving the piece; "vertical" is a move forward (toward the opponent's side of the board) or backward (toward one's own side) along the file occupied by the piece; and "up" and "down" refer to movement from one board to another.

### THE UPPER BOARD

**Sylph:** The Sylph has a move on the upper board which is essentially the converse of that of a pawn. It moves forward only, one square diagonally either to the left or right, and it can capture a piece on the upper board which lies directly ahead of it by moving forward into that square and supplanting the opposing piece that was located there. Thus, every time a Sylph makes a capture on the upper board, it changes the color of the diagonal along which it makes further (non-capturing) moves, from dark to light or vice versa. Gold's Sylphs begin the game on the light-colored squares of the second rank, while the Sylphs of the Scarlet side start on the dark-colored squares of the seventh rank.

In addition to its movement and capture powers on the upper board, the Sylph can capture an opposing piece on the middle board which lies directly below it. This is the only way in which the Sylph can move to the middle board. It cannot move to, nor make a capture upon, the lower board. Once located on the middle board, the

**Sylph (upper board)**



Sylph cannot move except to return to the upper board. It may do this by moving directly upward to the square it previously occupied, or by moving upward to any of the six starting squares for Sylphs of the appropriate color. A Sylph cannot capture by means of an upward move; it must return to the upper board by moving into an unoccupied square.

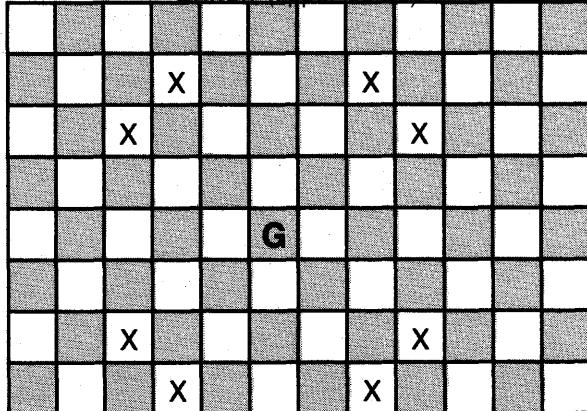
A Sylph located at 3c4 can move to 3b5 or 3d5. It can occupy 3c5 or 2c4 by capturing an opposing piece, if one is located on either of those squares. After making a capture at 2c4, the Sylph can move back to 3c4 on a subsequent turn, if that square is empty, or it can move up to any unoccupied starting square. For a Gold Sylph, the legal destinations are 3a2, 3c2, 3e2, 3g2, 3i2, and 3k2.

A Sylph that reaches the eighth rank on the upper board can move no farther on that board, but retains the power to capture downward. If such a capture is accomplished, the Sylph can regain mobility on the upper board by moving up into one of the starting squares for Sylphs of the appropriate color.

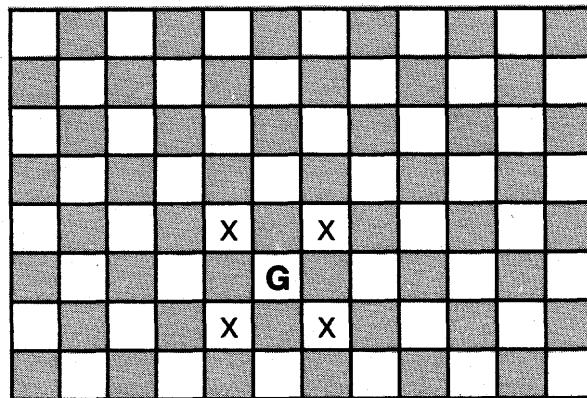
**Griffon:** Starting squares for the Gold Griffons are 3c1 and 3k1; the Scarlet Griffons begin at 3c8 and 3k8. When on the upper board, a Griffon moves one square horizontally or vertically and two squares diagonally. Like the knight, it vaults over intervening squares (even if they are occupied) and only exerts control over the destination square, not the intervening ones. (This is identical to the move of the elephant in Korean chess.) A Griffon at 3d4 can move to or capture a piece at 3a2, 3b1, 3f1, 3g2, 3g6, 3f7, 3b7, or 3a6.

In addition, a Griffon may occupy the middle board by a move down to one of the four squares on the diagonal from the upper-board square it started from. (Note that a Griffon located on the edge of the upper board only commands two squares on the middle board instead of four.) A Griffon returns to the upper board by a move to any of the four (or two) squares diagonally above the

**Griffon (upper board)**



**Griffon (middle board)**

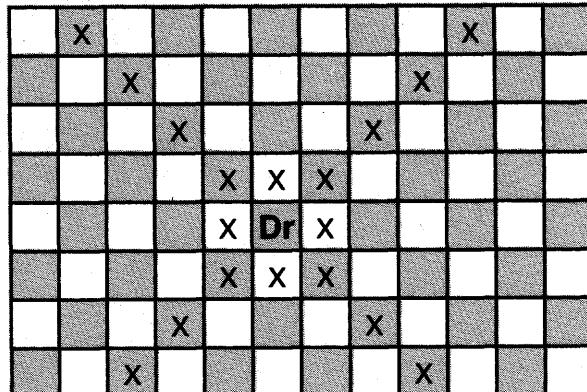


Griffon. It can move between the upper and middle boards whether or not a capture is involved. A Griffon at 3d4 can move to or capture at 2c5, 2c3, 2e3, or 2e5.

While a Griffon is on the middle board, it forfeits the power of flight, and as such it can only move and capture in the squares diagonally adjacent to it. A Griffon located at 2e5 commands all of the following squares: 2f6, 2f4, 2d4, 2d6, 3f6, 3f4, 3d4, and 3d6.

**Dragon:** The starting square for the Gold Dragon is 3g1, and the Scarlet Dragon begins at 3g8. A Dragon's movement and capture powers on the upper board are a combination of the moves of the king and the bishop: unlimited along the diagonals, or one square in

**Dragon (upper board)**

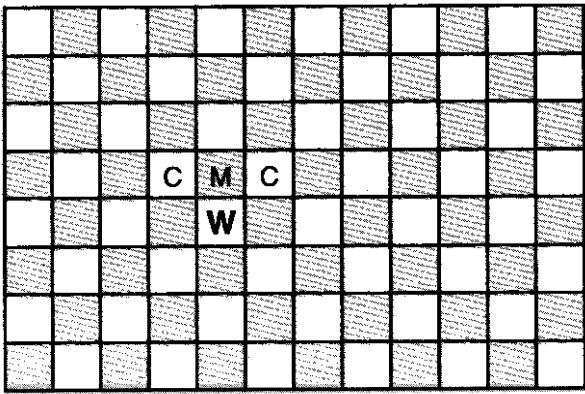


any horizontal or vertical direction. While the Dragon cannot move downward, it does have the unique ability to capture an opposing piece on the middle board which lies in the square directly beneath it or on any of the squares horizontally or vertically adjacent to that square. The captured piece is removed from the middle board, but the Dragon remains on the upper board. A Dragon at 3c4 could capture "from afar" an opposing piece located at 2c4, 2c5, 2d4, 2c3, or 2b4.

## THE MIDDLE BOARD

**Warrior:** At the start of the game, the twelve Gold Warriors are positioned along the second rank, and their Scarlet counterparts begin on the seventh rank. The move of the Warrior is identical to that of a pawn, except that a Warrior cannot advance two squares on its first move. The Warrior can move into an unoccupied square vertically ahead of its location, and it can capture an opposing piece located on either adjacent diagonal square ahead of it. The Gold

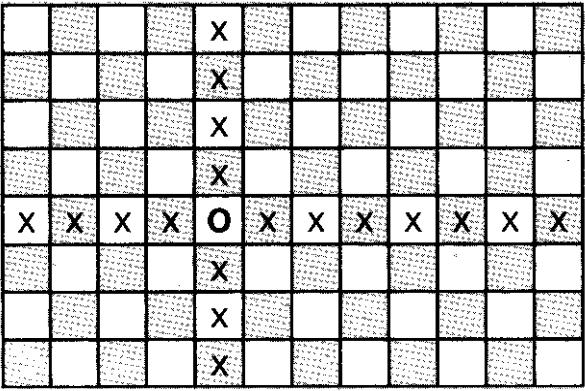
Warrior (middle board)



Warrior which starts the game at 2c2 can move to 2c3, or it can occupy either 2b3 or 2d3 by capturing an opposing piece located on one of those squares. A Warrior that reaches the opponent's back rank is promoted to a Hero, in the same fashion that a pawn is promoted. However, unlike standard chess, the owning player does not have a choice; a pawn can be promoted to a queen, bishop, knight, or rook, but a Warrior can only become a Hero. A Warrior cannot move to or capture pieces located on the upper or lower boards.

**Oliphant:** The Oliphants for each side start on the corner squares of the middle board – 2a1 and 2i1 for Gold, 2a8 and 2i8 for Scarlet. The move of an Oliphant is identical to that of a rook – that is, as many squares horizontally or vertically as desired, as long as no piece interferes with its path of movement. An Oliphant cannot move to or capture pieces located on the upper or lower boards.

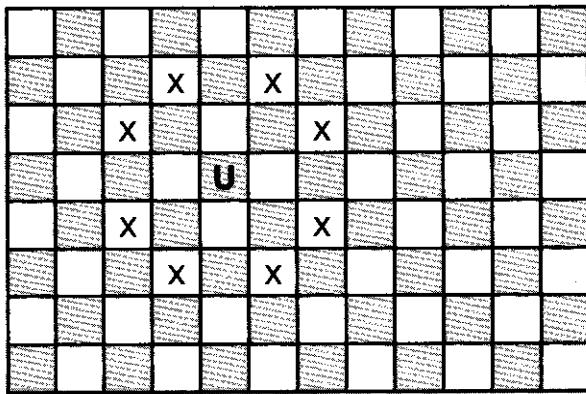
Oliphant (middle board)



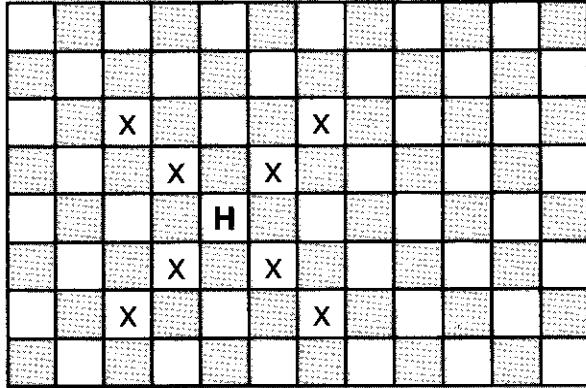
**Unicorn:** The Unicorns for each side start on the squares horizontally adjacent to the Oliphants – 2b1 and 2k1 for Gold, 2b8 and 2k8 for Scarlet. A Unicorn moves and captures in the same way as a knight, including the ability to vault over pieces on intervening squares. It cannot move to or capture pieces located on the upper or lower boards.

**Hero:** The Heroes for each side start adjacent to the Unicorns – 2c1 and 2j1 for Gold, 2c8 and 2j8 for Scarlet. On the middle board, a Hero moves either one or two squares in any diagonal direction, with the ability to vault over an intervening piece on a two-square move. Capture is accomplished in the same manner.

Unicorn (middle board)



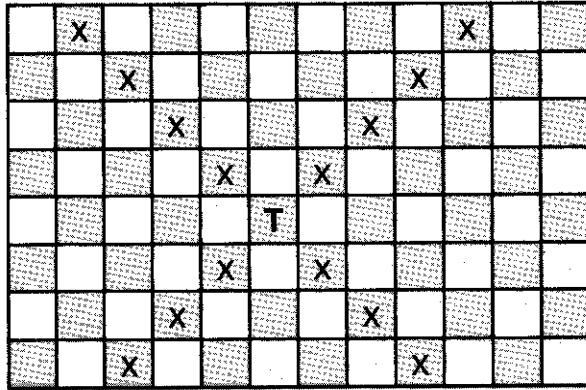
Hero (middle board)



A Hero can also move up or down one board at a time, going to any square diagonally adjacent to the square directly above or below its former location. A move back to the middle board is accomplished the same way. When located on the upper or lower board, a Hero's only move is to return to the middle board; it cannot travel to any square other than the one to which it ascended or descended. A move from one board to another can involve a capture if so desired.

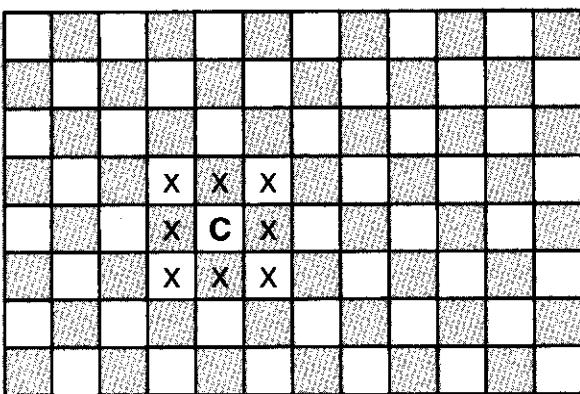
**Thief:** The two Thief pieces for each side start the game adjacent to the Heroes – 2d1 and 2i1 for Gold, 2d8 and 2i8 for Scarlet. A Thief moves and captures exactly as a bishop, going any number of squares diagonally as long as no piece interferes with its path of movement. It cannot move to or capture pieces located on the upper and lower boards,

Thief (middle board)



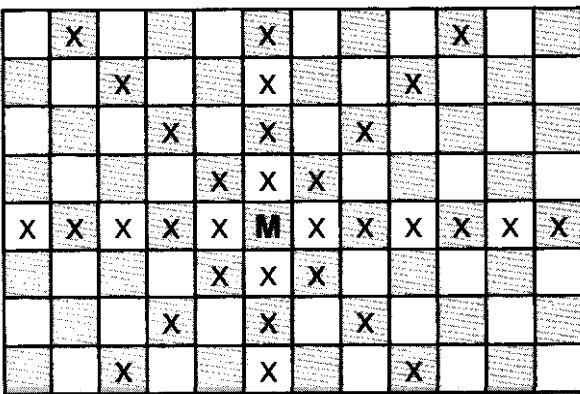
**Cleric:** The Gold Cleric starts on 2e1, the Scarlet Cleric on 2e8. The basic, two-dimensional move of a Cleric is the same as that of the king: one square in any direction. In addition, a Cleric can move one square directly up or down, and retains its full movement (and capture) abilities on both the upper and lower boards.

### Cleric (all boards)

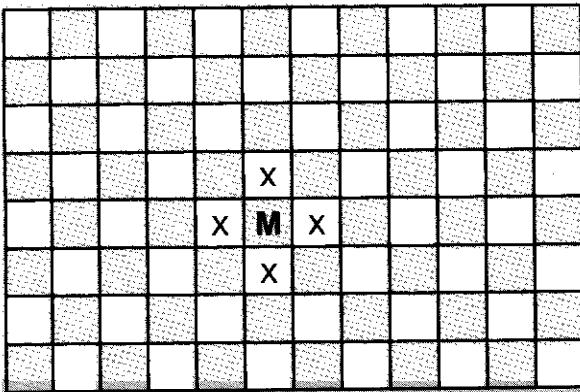


**Mage:** The Mage for each side starts on the square adjacent to the Cleric – 2f1 for Gold, 2f8 for Scarlet. On the middle board, a Mage moves and captures in the same way as the queen, able to follow an unobstructed path in any horizontal, vertical, or diagonal direction. In addition, a Mage can move (and capture, if applicable) directly

### Mage (middle board)



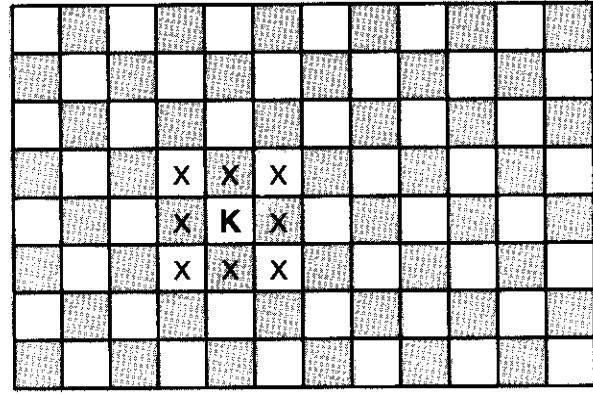
### Mage (upper or lower board)



upward or downward across one or more boards. However, a Mage on either the upper or lower board is limited to a move of one square in a horizontal or vertical direction. A Mage located at 2c4 could move up to 3c4, and on its next move could go downward two boards to 1c4. If the Mage then remained on the lower board, it could only move to 1c5, 1d4, 1c3, or 1b4.

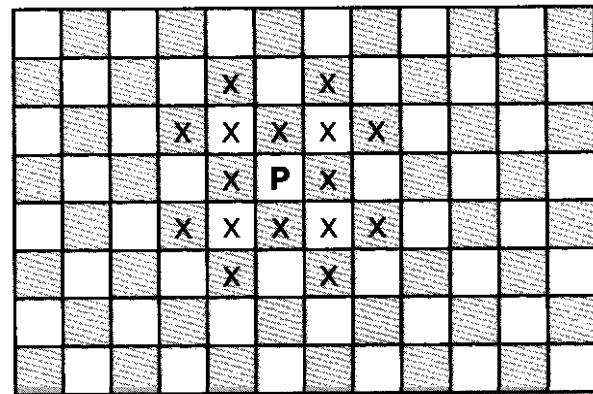
**King:** The King for each side begins on the square adjacent to the Mage – 2g1 for Gold, 2g8 for Scarlet. The King moves and captures similarly to a king in standard chess. In addition, the King may move (and capture) by shifting one square directly up or down. A King which has moved to the upper or lower board cannot move upon those boards, and must return to the middle board before it can again move and capture normally.

### King (middle board)

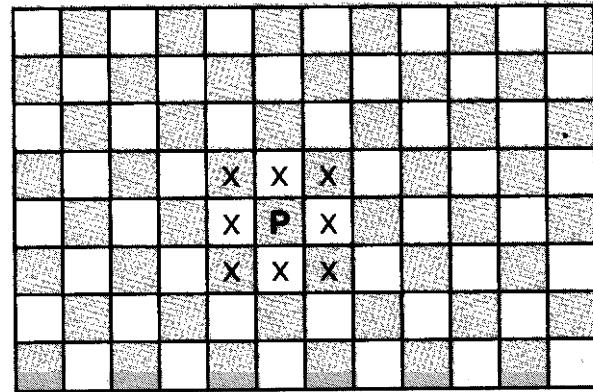


**Paladin:** The Paladin for each side begins in the square adjacent to the King – 2h1 for Gold, 2g8 for Scarlet. On the middle board, a Paladin’s movement and capture abilities are a combination of those of a king and a knight. It can also move upward or downward with a knight-like move, i.e. one board up and two squares horizontally or vertically, or two boards up and one square horizontally or vertically, and it can vault over intervening pieces with this sort of move, just

### Paladin (middle board)



### Paladin (upper or lower board)



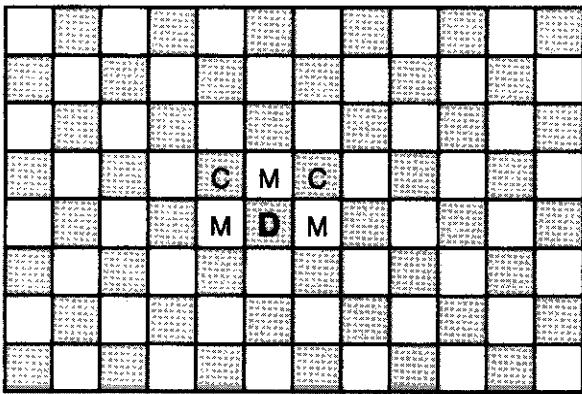
as if the move did not involve a change of boards. Upon the upper or lower board, the Paladin is limited to a king-like move (and capture) of one square in any direction. A Paladin located at 3c4 can move between boards to any of the following squares: 2c6, 2e4, 2c2, 2a4, 1c5, 1d4, 1c3, or 1b4.

## THE LOWER BOARD

**Dwarf:** The six Gold Dwarves start on the dark-colored squares of the second rank on the lower board; the six Scarlet Dwarves begin the game on the light-colored squares of the seventh rank on the lower board. Similar to a Warrior, a Dwarf can make a non-capturing move one square vertically ahead, and captures ahead diagonally. In addition, a Dwarf can make a non-capturing move

one square in either horizontal direction, and it can capture an opposing piece on the middle board that lies directly above the Dwarf. If a Dwarf moves to the middle board by means of a capture, it retains the movement and capture powers it has on the lower board, but a Dwarf cannot move to or capture pieces located on the upper board. It may return to the lower board by a move directly down to an unoccupied square; *i.e.*, the downward move cannot

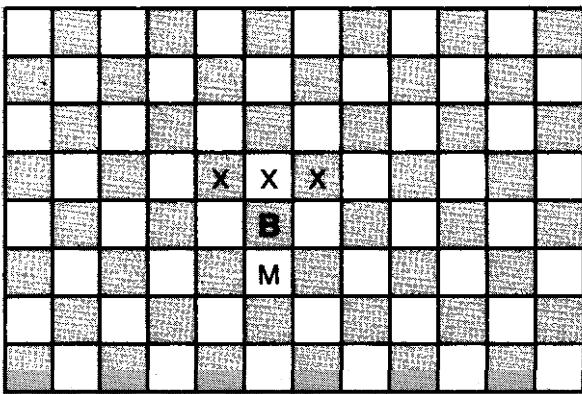
**Dwarf** (lower board)



involve a capture. A Dwarf on 1d4 could move (without capturing) into 1d5, 1c4, or 1e4; it could capture an opposing piece located on 1c5, 1e5, or 2d4. A Dwarf on 2d4 could return to the lower board by moving to 1d4, but only if that square is unoccupied. A Dwarf that reaches the opponent's back rank is limited to horizontal moves on the board it occupies, and also retains the ability to move between the lower and middle boards in the manner described above.

**Basilisk:** The two Gold Basilisks start on 1c1 and 1k1; the Scarlet Basilisks start on 1c8 and 1k8. A Basilisk moves one square at a time, either ahead diagonally or vertically or backward vertically. It captures by forward movement only. A Basilisk also has the unique ability of "freezing" an opposing piece — but not a friendly piece — located directly above it on the middle board, such that the opposing piece cannot move until the Basilisk is moved or captured. (This "freezing" is automatic and involuntary; the player owning the

**Basilisk** (lower board)

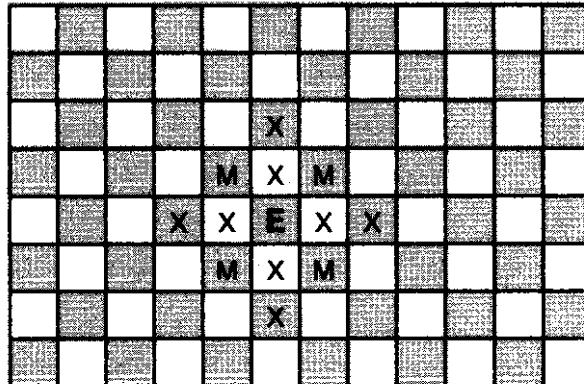


Basilisk cannot choose not to immobilize the piece, and does not have to specifically declare that the "freeze" is in effect.) If the opposing King is the piece being "frozen," the King is checkmated if any other piece attacks it and the opponent is unable to capture the attacking piece or interpose a piece to blunt the attack.

A Basilisk located on 1d4 can make a move or a capture into 1c5, 1d5, or 1e5. It can move to 1d3 if that square is unoccupied, and it automatically "freezes" any opposing piece on 2d4, or one that is subsequently moved into 2d4. A Basilisk cannot move off the lower board or (with the exception of the "freezing" power) capture a piece on any other board.

**Elemental:** The Gold Elemental starts on 1g1; the Scarlet Elemental begins the game on 1g8. An Elemental can move one square diagonally or one or two squares horizontally or vertically. It captures only on horizontal or vertical moves. It may move up to the middle board to make a capture by moving one square horizontally or vertically and then directly upward. It may remain unmoving on the middle board if so desired, or it can return to the lower board by a reverse of the upward move, *i.e.*, directly down and then one square horizontally or vertically. The upward move can only be

**Elemental** (lower board)



made if a capture is involved, but the downward move can be made without capturing.

An Elemental on 1d4 can move (but not capture) into 1c5, 1e5, 1e3, or 1c3. It can move or capture into 1d5, 1d6, 1e4, 1f4, 1d3, 1d2, 1c4, or 1b4. It can capture upward into 2d5, 2e4, 2d3, or 2c4. An Elemental on 2d4 can move or capture downward into 1d5, 1e4, 1d3, or 1c4.

#### Movement between boards

At first, it may be difficult for players to envision and properly execute the upward or downward movement of pieces. However, "thinking in three dimensions" will come easily after one or two practice games are played. Perhaps the hardest single concept to grasp is the idea of intervening squares on moves from one board to another. The general rule is this: If a piece is unable to vault over intervening squares in its basic (two-dimensional) move, then it is likewise unable to move between boards if a piece blocks the path it must take. Specific applications for particular pieces are as follows:

The Griffon, the Hero, and the Paladin all have the knight-like ability to vault intervening squares, and this applies on any upward or downward move made by those pieces. (The square directly above or below the piece in question need not be vacant.)

The Mage can move from the lower board to the upper board (or vice versa) in a single move, but it cannot vault intervening squares. Thus, in order for the Mage to travel upward from 1d4 to 3d4, the square at 2d4 must be vacant.

The Elemental is something of a special case. Its move between boards is a two-step process, and it cannot vault over intervening squares. Its upward move begins with a shift of one square horizontally or vertically on the lower board; thus, at least one of the squares horizontally or vertically adjacent to the Elemental must be vacant in order for it to make an upward move. The Elemental is even more restricted when moving down from the middle board; since the horizontal or vertical move is preceded by a move directly down, the square immediately beneath the Elemental must be vacant in order for it to make a downward move.

#### Chess rules that do not apply

Two conventions of standard chess are not part of the DRAGON-CHESS rules. The Warrior is unable to move two squares ahead on its first move, and as such it is not possible for a Warrior to capture *en passant* as a pawn does. Also, because of the multiple boards, greater area of play, and larger number of men, castling is not possible in DRAGONCHESS.

## Values of the pieces

The complexities of multiple-board play and the varying powers of the pieces in DRAGONCHESS makes absolute valuation far more difficult than it is for standard chess pieces. In chess, a pawn is valued at 1, knights and bishops at 3, rooks at 5, and the queen at 9. (If the king were not of infinite value, its movement and capturing power would give it a value of 4.) The approximate relative values of the pieces in DRAGONCHESS is detailed below, to give players an idea of which exchanges are beneficial and which are not. For instance, the trade of a Hero for a Griffon is roughly an even exchange, while the trade of a Basilisk for an Oliphant will generally result in a material advantage for the player losing the Basilisk. However, it should always be kept in mind that the true "value" of a piece in any game situation depends primarily on the piece's location and its role in the game, rather than on its theoretical movement and capture powers.

Piece	Value **	Piece	Value
King		Thief	4
Mage	11	Elemental	4
Paladin	10	Basilisk	3
Cleric	9	Unicorn	2 1/2
Dragon	8	Dwarf	2
Griffon	5	Sylph	1
Oliphant	5	Warrior	1
Hero	4 1/2		

\*\* – In practice, the value of the King is infinite, since the loss of this piece means the loss of the game.

## Movement and capture notation

The method of recording moves in DRAGONCHESS is basically the same as for standard chess, with certain differences (explained earlier) to account for the different names of the pieces and the multiple boards. The following examples cover all the situations that could occur in a game:

1) w2f3  
2) S/3e2-3d3

A basic non-capturing move; notation 1 is the first non-capturing move that the Gold Warrior starting at 2f2 can make. (Read it as "Warrior moves to 2f3.") In most cases, a non-capturing move can be noted simply by naming the type of piece being moved (W) and the square it moves to (2f3). When more than one piece of the same type is capable of making the same move, the moving piece is specifically identified by naming the square it is moving from, using a "/" to indicate "at." (Read notation 2 as "Sylph at 3e2 moves to 3d3.") In this notation, a hyphen is used to separate the location square from the destination square.

3) W2e3  
4) Wx2e3  
5) W/2d2x2e3  
6) WxU2e3  
7) WxU

Five ways of describing a capture; the correct notation depends upon the position of the pieces and, to some extent, the preference of the players. Notation 3 can be used if only one Warrior is capable of moving to 2e3, and if that move involves a capture. Notation 4 is more specific, using the "x" to indicate a capture. (Read as "Warrior captures (unspecified piece) at 2e3.") Notation 5 is necessary when more than one Warrior would be capable of making a capture at 2e3, again using the "/" (as in notation 2 above) to indicate "at." (Read as "Warrior at 2d2 captures at 2e3.") Notation 6 includes the identification of the type of piece captured – in this case, the Unicorn located at 2e3. Notation 7, read simply as "Warrior captures Unicorn," can be used if only one such capture is possible. In most cases, the proper notation would be 4, 5, or 6, or a minor variation on one of those. The important thing is to describe each move in such a way that

the notation could only refer to one specific move by one specific piece. This will avoid possible confusion if the moves of a game are to be studied or replayed.

8) W2f8(H)

The move and promotion of a Warrior. (Read as "Warrior moves to 2f8 and is promoted to a Hero.")

9) Drx2c4

A capture "from afar" by a Dragon. (Read as "Dragon captures (unspecified piece) at 2c4.") To avoid the awkward "Drx" usage, this move could be written as "Dr2c4" since any move by the Dragon involving a square on the middle board must necessarily be a capture "from afar."

10) UxOch

Illustrating the use of "ch" to indicate a move that puts the opposing King in check. (Read as "Unicorn captures Oliphant with check.")

Other symbols:  
dbl ch  
dis ch  
mate

These three terms, taken from standard chess notation, indicate certain special occurrences. Double check (dbl ch) occurs whenever a move enables one or more pieces to give check at the same time. Discovered check (dis ch) occurs when the move of one piece opens a path that enables a different piece to give check. And "mate," of course, is checkmate – noted on the final move of a game, when the King is attacked in such a way that it cannot avoid being captured on the attacker's next move.

No special notation is given for the Basilisk's "freezing" power, since it is not technically a move or a capture, and since it is automatically assumed that any piece occupying the square above the Basilisk is frozen. Thus, a notation of B1e3 makes it clear that (a) the Basilisk now occupies square 1e3 and (b) any opposing piece located at 2e3 is thereby immobilized as long as the Basilisk remains where it is.

## Strategic and tactical tips

No single piece of text – even one many times longer than this – could fully describe and analyze the myriad positions and situations that can occur in DRAGONCHESS. However, some general strictures are apparent from an examination of how the various pieces move and capture, and certain basic facts of chess strategy apply equally to DRAGONCHESS.

Mobility is all-important, and, just as in chess, control of the central squares is usually a prerequisite for victory. The rectangular board of DRAGONCHESS makes the "central squares" area somewhat more difficult to define than it is in chess – but it certainly is a larger area. It could be described as a 2x6 rectangle with 2d4, 2d5, 2i5, and 2i4 as its corners; or, a 2x8 rectangle extended out on either side; or, a 4x4 rectangle in the center of the middle board. In any event, the side that does the better job of controlling the center squares will have a greater amount of mobility and will more easily be able to bring pieces to bear upon critical squares anywhere on the playing surfaces.

In many instances, the square that a piece stands on is not as important as the squares that the piece controls. Players should be mindful of moving their pieces into positions where they command a large number of squares, thereby limiting the opponent's ability to occupy those same locations.

In general, it is wise not to bring the "big guns" (particularly the Mage and the Paladin) into active positions until some of the minor pieces have been developed. Making a lot of moves with the Mage (for instance) early in the game is usually a bad idea, because this delays the development of other pieces that could have been moved out instead, and because this could subject the Mage to a series of harassing attacks from the opponent's minor pieces – which are being developed at the same time that they are doing the harassing.

(In chess, this phenomenon is known as a "queen hunt," and it has led to the downfall of many a player who had visions of ravaging the opposition with sweeping moves of the queen — but instead ended up without a queen to move.)

It is no accident that each side's Dragon begins the game directly above the King of the same side. While the Dragons are obviously powerful offensive pieces, each must play predominantly a defensive role to begin with — for if one Dragon sallies forth on the upper board to wreak havoc upon the opponent's middle-board pieces, the King may be left vulnerable to a quick but deadly attack from the opposing Dragon.

The power of the Basilisk to immobilize an opposing piece has a lot of potential for use in offensive and defensive strategy. To help protect one of your own pieces, move it to the square above one of your Basilisks. Then, if it is captured, the capturing piece is "frozen" and you can capture it more or less at your leisure without necessarily having to make the return capture immediately. A well-timed Basilisk move can lead to an abrupt checkmate even if the opposing King is not the piece that is frozen, in a case where the Basilisk immobilizes a piece that was crucial to the defense of the King. Except for the fact that it occupies a square on the board, an immobilized piece can be treated as if it did not exist. An immobilized Mage may be better than no Mage at all — but not by much.

In general, the pieces on the lower board (especially the Dwarves) do not play critical roles in the opening or the middle game, but if the Dwarves haven't already been moved too far forward, they can be very useful in the endgame (when relatively few pieces remain on the board) as defensive outposts, to prevent the opponent's middle-board pieces from penetrating too deeply into the territory nearest your side of the board.

Do not underestimate the power of the Cleric. Of the five types of pieces that can move up or down to any of the three boards, the Cleric is the only one which moves and captures in the same fashion regardless of which board it occupies. The Paladin and Mage are limited in their mobility when not on the middle board, to such an

extent that they will not generally spend much time on the upper or lower board — and the Heroes and the King, although they can move to the upper or lower board, cannot move on those boards, and the King especially can be easily trapped if left on the upper or lower board for any longer than necessary.

#### Putting together a game

For reasons that should be obvious, this presentation could not include actual components for a DRAGONCHESS game — making a board and filling it with pieces must be left up to you. For our playtesting and development purposes, we constructed a board from sheets of plexiglass with contact paper applied to form the checkerboard patterns. The boards were spaced approximately six inches apart, allowing enough room for hands to reach in and manipulate pieces. The squares on our board are 1½" on a side, making a playing surface 18" wide and 12" deep. The plexiglass sheets were cut large enough to allow another 1½" all around, and had ¼" holes drilled in each corner. Through these holes we inserted threaded metal rods, fastened into place with connectors to space the boards properly and capped on each end with plastic knobs to prevent scratching the surface on which the entire board is placed during play. It probably isn't necessary to build a three-dimensional board; three flat rectangles placed in a row on the tabletop could be used to represent upper, middle, and lower levels. But it's a lot easier to visualize the up-and-down moves of pieces if the playing surface is actually composed of three levels.

The pieces came from our collection of metal miniatures, and they do not in all cases exactly resemble the pieces they represent. (For instance, we used centaur figures for Oliphants because we couldn't find any 25mm scale elephants — and even if we could have, they would have been too large for the board.) Any sort of pieces will do, even simple tokens, as long as each type of piece looks distinctly different from the others.

Good luck, and may all your moves be ones that Rexfelis would envy. . . .

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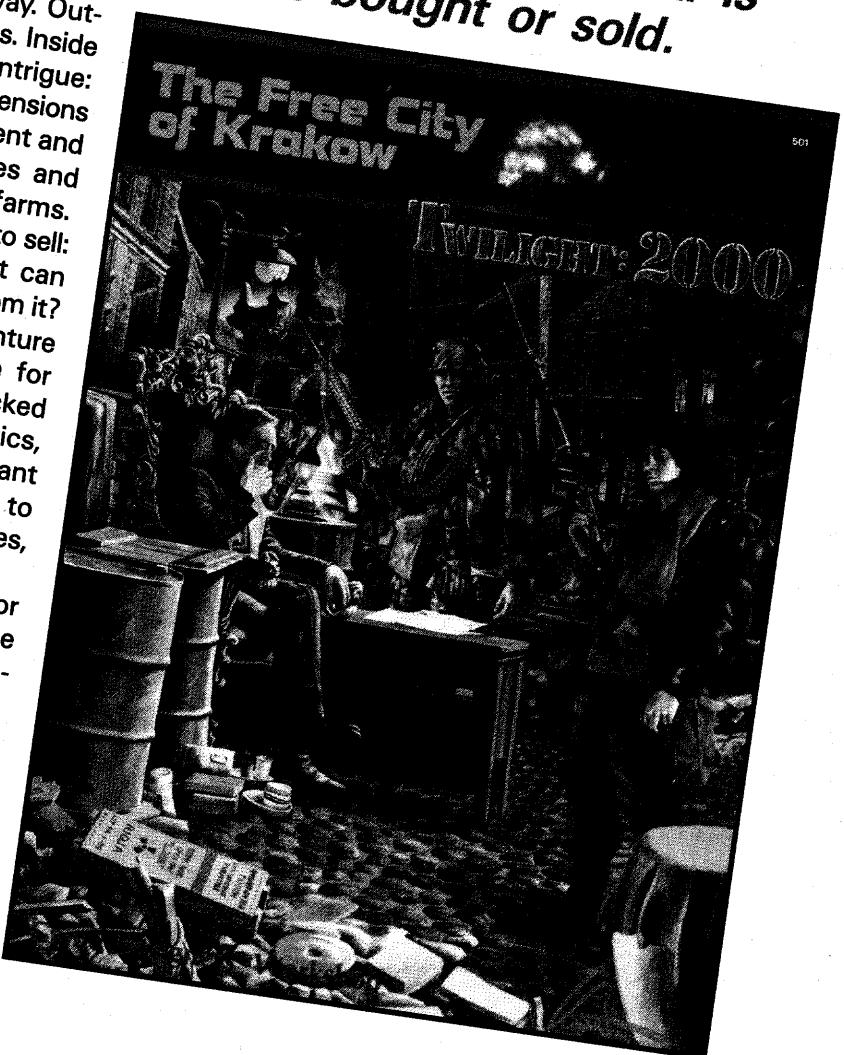
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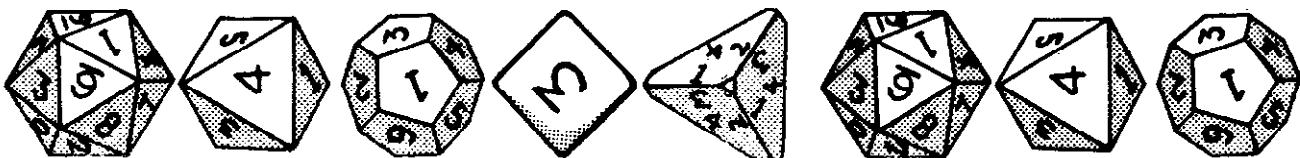


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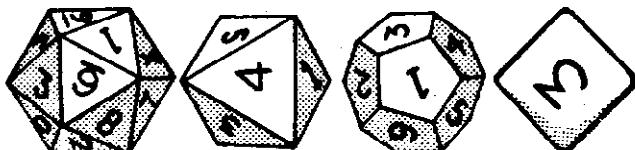
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# The City Beyond the Gate



# The City Beyond the Gate

## An adventure for high-level AD&D® characters

Designed by Robert Schroeck

### INTRODUCTION

As Roger Moore noted in his adventure *The Dancing Hut* (DRAGON® issue #83), high-level adventures are much in demand, and often the most powerful magic items are the sources of many adventures. So it is with this particular adventure. However, unlike in *The Dancing Hut*, characters who visit *The City Beyond the Gate* will not find powerful enemies to challenge them in combat, nor magic in great amounts. Instead, they will find themselves in an alien world where they must use wit, wile, and stealth to achieve their goal. They will find themselves in a modern, technological city.

Obviously, an entire city cannot be presented in the excruciating detail required to give players a complete sense of their locale and its atmosphere and populace. Therefore, this adventure is for the most part given in a very general form, with guidelines and suggestions to aid the DM in clearly and accurately conveying a sense of this new milieu. Please note that, to this end, many of the locations described in the following text are not critical to the completion of the adventure. They are described here in the interest of giving a reasonably complete picture of the city in which the adventure takes place.

*The City Beyond the Gate* is designed for characters of 9th level and up. However, with some modification of the Gate Island section and the goal of the expedition, this adventure could conceivably accommodate characters of as low as 4th or 5th level.

### THE GOAL

The fabled *Mace of St. Cuthbert* has been lost from the sight of both human and demi-human for many centuries. Some claim it lies at the heart of an active volcano, guarded by salamanders and flowing lava; others swear it lies buried deep inside the earth, warded by powerful magics raised by those who would see its power denied to the forces of Law and Good. A few assert that it has never left the possession of the Saint, and even now he holds it in his strong right hand. But a few claim that none of these are so — that long before the Sainted Cuthbert rose to his exalted station, his mace was hidden away from those who would steal it before he returned for it, hidden away outside the bounds of normal time and space, in a place so outlandish that the Mace's power and destiny would be unknown and unknowable, and thus safe. These same seers claim that the time is coming for the &/face to reappear in the

world and lend its strength to the forces of right before returning to its owner.

The *Mace of Cuthbert* was hidden in a universe other than that in which the "natural laws" of magic and miracle hold sway. In fact, it has been secreted in a technological universe. To be more specific, it is on our Earth, in London, England, in a museum.

The job of quantifying the milieu of a technological world such as this one is difficult but vitally important. The best treatment of the subject is found in issue #57 of DRAGON Magazine, in the article "Modern monsters: The perils of 20th-century adventuring," by Ed Greenwood. However, if a copy of this article is unavailable, do not panic — all vital information is to be found below. "Modern monsters" is a useful and entertaining background work for those DMs who plan to run this adventure. Players with some idea of what they will be getting into might also wish to examine the article, for it contains a section on tactics that just might keep their characters alive.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Magic works in "our world," though with some limitations. Magic-users without spell books will, of course, be unable to regain cast spells. Clerics will be completely out of touch with their deities and their servants, and subsequently will not be able to regain spells above second level. There may be problems obtaining material components for spells, and substitutions may result in interesting alterations of spell effects at the DM's option. Some spells are affected by the location; see below for more information on spell alterations.

Modern humans will generally be 0 level, with 1-3 hit points. Police and security officers will generally be the equivalent of 2nd- to 4th-level fighters. SWAT teams, military forces, professional mercenaries, and the like will range from 5th to 8th level in the fighter class. Thieves of all levels up to 14th will be found. The higher the thief's level, the rarer and more specialized he will be; for example, thieves of 10th level and up in the modern world will often be sophisticated cat burglars or jewelry thieves *a la* "The Saint." Thieves from the modern world will not have the ability to read foreign languages.

There are no native spellcasters on Earth. Note that the Anglican and Catholic churchmen of the vicinity are not likely to look with kindness upon "pagan" priests (i.e., player-character clerics) who perform

so-called "miracles." Also note that while the use of the more spectacular spells may panic the populace, minor magics are likely to go unnoticed, except perhaps by psychic researchers and tabloid newspaper reporters, either of whom will cause no end of trouble for a party.

Encountered natives with training in karate, kung fu, or other martial arts should be treated as 1st- to 5th-level monks. Of the total, 75% will be 1st level, 10% 2nd level, 8% 3rd level, 5% 4th level, and 2% 5th level equivalents. They will possess none of the special, semi-magical abilities of regular monks, having only combat abilities, saving throw bonuses, and thief abilities as seem reasonable.

Street thugs and such ilk will range from 0 level to 2nd level in either fighter or thief classes, with fighters predominating. For examples of extraordinary 0-level types, see the AD&D *Rogues Gallery*, pp. 28-29.

The most common weapons to be encountered in the modern world are knives, billy clubs and handguns. Treat knives as daggers, adjusting damage to fit blade size. The standard switchblade knife given in the table below has an eight-inch blade; the blades of folding (pocket) knives range from three to seven inches, and combat and survival knives range from six to eighteen. Treat billy clubs as identical to clubs, except doing 1-4 points vs. size S or M and 1-2 vs. size L opponents. Handguns and other weapons likely to be encountered are presented on the "Firearms and other weapons" table given herein (based on the original in "Modern monsters").

London "bobbies" (or "woolies," as they are sometimes known by runaways and the like) will be equipped with billy clubs and .357 revolvers. Lower-class thieves will possess anything short of a submachine gun. Terrorists, while unlikely to be encountered, can be assumed to possess all of the above weapons (excluding the drover's whip), plus hand grenades (doing 4-10/4-10 to all within 30' (save vs. petrification for half damage) plus stunning (for 1-4 rounds) and deafening (for 1-4 turns) effects; victims 30'-60' from the explosion suffer 1 round of stunning and 1-4 rounds of deafness; save does not apply to these effects. Terrorists may also possess simple bombs (producing 8-48 points damage, plus a system shock roll for survival for all within 60') and stunning and deafening effects as above; save vs. petrification for half damage and no system shock). SWAT teams are equipped as regular police officers, also

having rifles, shotguns, tear gas (treat as a stinking cloud), and body armor that improves their AC to 5.

The drover's whip is included in the table because of the numbers of horse-drawn beer wagons traversing the streets of London during the average day. The driver of any wagon with more than two horses will possess such a whip, but he rarely uses it on his team in such a way as to cause damage.

## ENCOUNTERS

The following tables are basically self-explanatory. Please bear in mind that these are strictly "extraordinary" encounters – that is, encounters other than the usual traffic to be found on the streets or in the park areas. There will always be traffic during the day and through most of the night, with a minimum of twenty cars, trucks and taxis per one-block area at any given time. During the day, there will always be 5-20 humans of both sexes and assorted ages within 40' of any PC(s), unless action is taken by the PCs to avoid people. Only late at night will the streets and parks be virtually empty.

### Street encounters

(1 in 4, check every turn)

#### Dice Daytime encounters

01-08	1-2 street urchins
09-11	Truant officer
12-18	1-4 police officers on foot
19-27	Crowd of 10-20 shoppers (50-100 near peddlers, 10% chance for a pickpocket to be with them)
28-34	Pushcart peddler (DM's option as to wares)
35-41	Pickpocket (treat as 10th-level thief)
42-55	Horse-drawn hackney cab
56-65	Bus (35% double-decker)
66-70	Beer wagon
71-81	Group of 2-12 tourists
82-89	Group of 2-6 children
90-93	1-6 punks
94-98	Reporter
99-00	Special (see subtable)

### Street encounters, continued

(1 in 4, check every turn)

#### Dice Nighttime encounters

01-10	1-4 street urchins
11-25	1-4 police on foot
26-37	1-3 police on horseback
38-45	1-2 police in patrol car
46-52	Bum/wino (15% chance is also pickpocket, equal to 6th-level thief)
53-61	Street gang (25% punks)
62-67	1-4 muggers (treat as 2nd-level fighters with clubs or knives)
68-77	Bus (35% double-decker)
78-88	Horse-drawn hackney cab
89-96	1-3 prostitutes
97-00	Special (see subtable)

### Park encounters

(1 in 6, check every 5 rounds)

#### Dice Daytime encounters

01-15	1-3 police officers (40% on horseback)
16-20	1-3 street urchins
21-25	Truant officer
26-32	2-16 children
33-38	Lovers
39-46	Band in bandstand
47-52	1-3 persons riding horseback
53-62	Nanny with pram (baby carriage)
63-74	2-12 people playing soccer
75-85	Picnicking family
86-98	Horse-drawn hackney cab
99-00	Special (see subtable)

#### Dice Nighttime encounters

01-25	1-3 police officers (50% on horseback)
26-35	Lovers
36-50	Street gang (35% punks)
51-60	1-4 muggers
61-65	Bum/wino (15% may be pickpocket, as above)
66-75	Horse-drawn hackney cab
76-95	1-3 prostitutes
96-00	Special (see subtable)

### Special encounters subtable

#### Dice Encounter

01-23	Major fire/fire engines on their way to a fire
24-31	Traffic helicopter or other low-flying aircraft
32-44	Major traffic accident
45-54	Mugging/robbery in progress
55-64	Street gang warfare (night only)
65-79	Police van (25% chance police will stop PCs and try to arrest them)
80-88	A tall, blue box with a bright light on top is found. A tall, curly-haired man with a floppy hat and a long scarf enters the box, followed by a girl saying, "But Doctor, where are we going now?" The light starts to blink, and the box makes hideous screeching noises and slowly vanishes. This encounter can only occur once.
89-95	Terrorist attack (bombing, sniper, or the like)
96-00	1-8 terrorists (incognito, not on an attack)

### Notes on encounter tables

*Street urchins* are "wild" children who live in the streets of London and are often accomplished thieves (1st-4th level). Sometimes orphans, more often than not they are rebellious kids escaping school or bad family situations and trying to survive on their own. To best portray the majority of these children, think of Fagin's crew in Oliver Twist. Urchins are not easily identified as such; they may have slightly grubbier clothing than the children found on the Park-Day matrix, but that may be the only outward distinction between them.

*Truant officers* are the bane of street urchins, seeking to take them off the street and see that they are taken care of. A truant officer is not necessarily a bad person, but he may be overworked and as a result a little bad-tempered. Most (75%) truant officers work in plain clothing, while the remainder wear uniforms similar to those of the police. They are unarmed.

## FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage (S-M / L)	Fire rate	Supply	Reload time	S	M	L	Range modifier		
								S	M	L
9mm/.45 pistol	1-8 / 1-6	4	7 or 8	¼	6	12	18	+3	+1	0
.357/.38 revolver	1-8 / 1-6	4	6	1	6	12	18	+3	+1	0
Rifle	2-12 / 2-10	2	2	½	11	19	35	+3	+2	0
Shotgun	1-8 / 1-6	1(2)	1(2)	2	4	8	13	+2	0	-3
Sawed-off shotgun	1-10 / 1-4	1(2)	1(2)	2	2	6	9	+5	0	-2
Submachine gun	2-8 / 2-8	20	20-50	¼	7	15	20	+5	+1	-1*
Slingshot	1 / 0-1	3	-	-	1 ½	2 ½	5	+1	0	-3
Switchblade	1-3 / 1-2	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	**
Garrot	1-4 / 1-2	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-
Drover's whip	1-8 / 1-6	-	-	-	½	1 ½	2 ½	-	-	-
Blackjack	1-4 / 1-2	-	-	-	½	-	-	-	-	-

\*— Increase range modifiers to + 8 (S), + 4 (M), and 0 (L) if fire is traversed across target.

\*\* — If garrot attack is made successfully and a hold can be maintained for three rounds, the target of the attack will be reduced to zero hit points by suffocation (this assumes a breathing target with a vulnerable neck area).

Police encounters should be treated with common sense. Bobbies who are armed **will** shoot persons attempting to escape arrest if they're considered dangerous and can't be run down on foot. English cops may have a reputation for being peaceful and helpful, but they are police officers just the same. Play them like they were polite N.Y.C. or L.A. cops.

Punks are outrageously dressed persons of either sex, usually in leather or other non-standard garb. Their hair will be in various shades not normally found in nature or completely shorn off, and their behavior will be calculated to shock or disgust. Think of a belligerent Boy George.

Street gangs will sometimes be composed of punks, but generally will conform to the American stereotype of the gang. They will number from 2-16 youths, armed with knives (10% chance for 1-4 9mm pistols). All but the leader will be 0-level humans; the leader will be a 1st-level fighter. A gang will usually (75%) be composed of males ranging from fourteen to twenty years in age. The remainder will be either all females of the same age (60%) or mixed.

Beer wagons are huge, wheeled vehicles, averaging 20' -30' long and carrying a dozen or more barrels of English beer, delivered daily to the local pubs. They are drawn by teams of six to ten large horses (Clydesdales or Percherons), guided by a driver who sits 10' off the ground. Consider the horses to be equal to heavy warhorses, but with only one hoof (smash) attack for 1-6 points each. By law, beer wagons always have the right-of-way on London streets; if one is encountered, it is likely that the party noticed the ruckus made by traffic getting (or being made to get) out of the wagon's way.

**Reporters** are likely to notice anything out of the ordinary about a party, like full armor and drawn weapons, and they will investigate. Even if PCs are disguised, a reporter is still 40% likely to notice something odd and check out his hunch. To this end, he or she will tail the PCs, attempting not to be noticed, and will take notes on their actions when applicable. A reporter may also consult police, street urchins and other sources of information on PCs, and may possibly alert police and other "hostiles" to the party's location. 40% of all reporters are female. 10% work for radio or wire services and 25% for television. The remainder are employed by the many London newspapers. Television reporters are 40% likely to have a camera crew ready nearby. More experienced newspaper and wire-service reporters may be the equals of 1st- to 3rd-level fighters or thieves, depending on the beat they work and the type of newspaper that employs them.

**Terrorists** are not likely to be nice. They will always be politically motivated, and fanaticism is not uncommon. Should a terrorist group get an idea of what a party is capable of, it will attempt to gain control of the PCs by using hostages or other means. There is the possibility that if the terrorists

see the party being persecuted, they might offer shelter and aid, at the DM's option. Terrorist groups will be composed of 1-6 each of fighters, thieves, and assassins, with levels from 3 to 6 (d4 + 2).

## VEHICLES

As Ed Greenwood pointed out in "Modern Monsters," vehicles in the modern world will be of countless forms, and almost all will be strange and unfamiliar to PCs. However, all non-motorized vehicles will be easily mastered, once their purpose and workings are determined; even a bicycle can be figured out in (at most) a day or two by the determined adventurer.

Motorized vehicles are another matter entirely. The accompanying table (adapted from Greenwood's original) gives the vital statistics on a good selection of vehicles likely to be found in the areas of London covered by this adventure. Note that Greenwood scaled down movement rates, sometimes by as much as a factor of ten; if you anticipate the possibility of a high-speed car chase through the streets of London, don't forget to restore full movement rates — otherwise it will be rather slow-moving. For off-road travel, keep movement rates given for all situations. Acceleration to full speed takes two rounds for most everything; large trucks require three rounds, while cars smaller than standard-sized, along with motorcycles and mopeds, need only one round to reach full speed. However, note that full speed is substantially greater than the maximum speed limit (which is somewhere around a 48"-50" rate, and slower in some areas).

It is possible for characters to learn to drive simple cars and trucks. This requires instruction (from someone who knows how to drive) given for a period of time equal in hours to twenty minus the intelligence score of the PC who is trying to learn. Once this

## VEHICLES TABLE

Vehicle	Maximum move per round	Weight (pounds)	Impact damage *	Notes
Car, subcompact	55"	up to 2500	1-2	4 passengers (2 in comfort), poor protection in collision
Car, compact	66"	3000	1-4	5 passengers (4 in comfort)
Car, standard**	70"	3500	1-4	6 passengers (5 in comfort)
Car, large (limousine)	78"	5000	1-6	6 passengers, heavy passenger protection
Small truck (including panel trucks and police vans)	70" (empty)	5500 (empty)	1-6	6 passengers (2 in comfort; police vans hold 8 prisoners), can carry 2 tons of cargo
Large truck (tractor trailers)	70"	200,000	1-8	3 passengers (up to 20 in trailer), can carry 60,000 lbs. of cargo.
Motorcycle	60"	500	1-2	2 passengers (1 in comfort)
Moped	30"	150	0-1	1 passenger

\* — Damage per 10 mph of velocity. Impact damage applies both to persons struck by and persons inside the vehicle, should it crash.  
\*\* — Includes police cruisers.

period of instruction is over, the PC will have sufficient knowledge of how to operate a vehicle if necessary. The instruction does not provide driving skills, which must be attained with more practice than the PCs will have time for, nor does it provide more than a cursory treatment of the rules of the road. As a result of these two factors, PC drivers will have a 25% chance per turn (non-cumulative) of causing an accident or attracting the attention of a police officer. Of course, such things as intoxication and magical effects will alter this percentage upward (DM's discretion as to the exact modification).

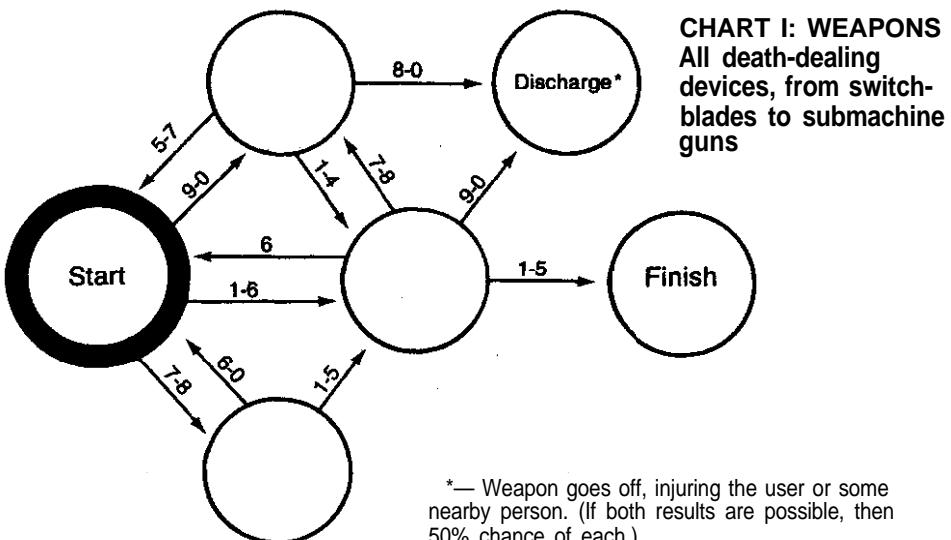
For purposes of atmosphere and accuracy, DMs should remember that traffic in England follows a flow pattern that is the reverse of that in America — vehicles drive on the left side of the road, not on the right. Consequently, the driver's seat is positioned differently, and the entire traffic system runs a little strangely (to those used to American driving). Do not remind players of this, though — let their characters discover it on their own. (One fighter from the original presentation of this adventure leaped in the left door of a police van to wrest the wheel from its driver, only to find an empty seat and the driver on the other side pulling a gun on him. . . .)

## OTHER TECHNOLOGY

During the course of this adventure, characters will inevitably encounter items of modern technology ranging from butane lighters and flashlights to household appliances to high-powered weapons. In the absence of someone to instruct them in their use, PCs may attempt to puzzle out modern artifacts on their own. To do so, they roll on one of the Investigation Charts given herein. Put a marker on the start position, and have the player roll a d10 for each

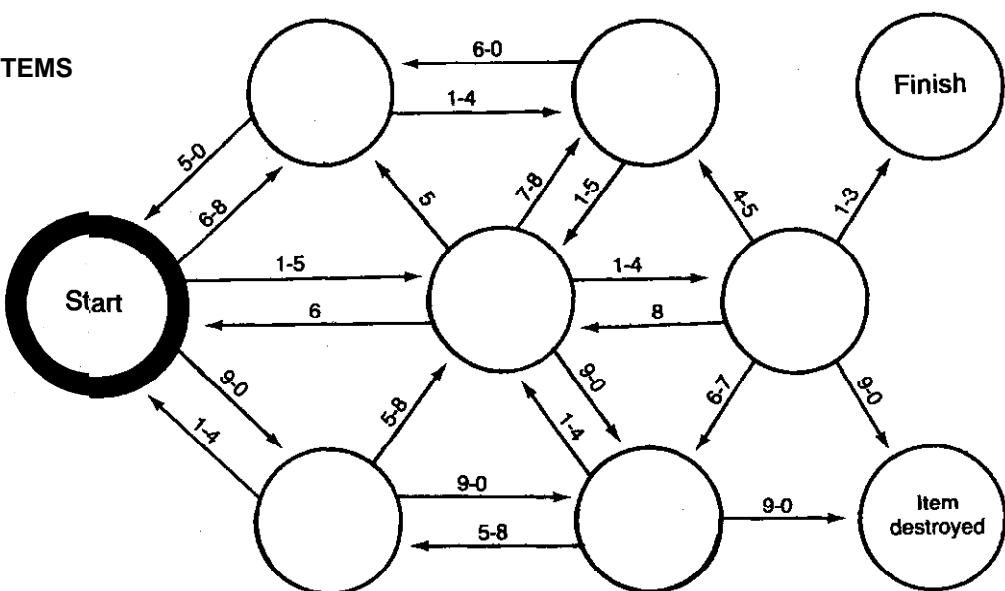
round his character spends puzzling out the item. The following modifiers apply to each roll (all modifiers are cumulative):

Intelligence less than 10 .....	+ 1
Intelligence greater than 14 .....	- 1
Similar object seen in use .....	- 1
Object has been explained by someone familiar with it .....	- 2
Operated similar object previously .....	- 2



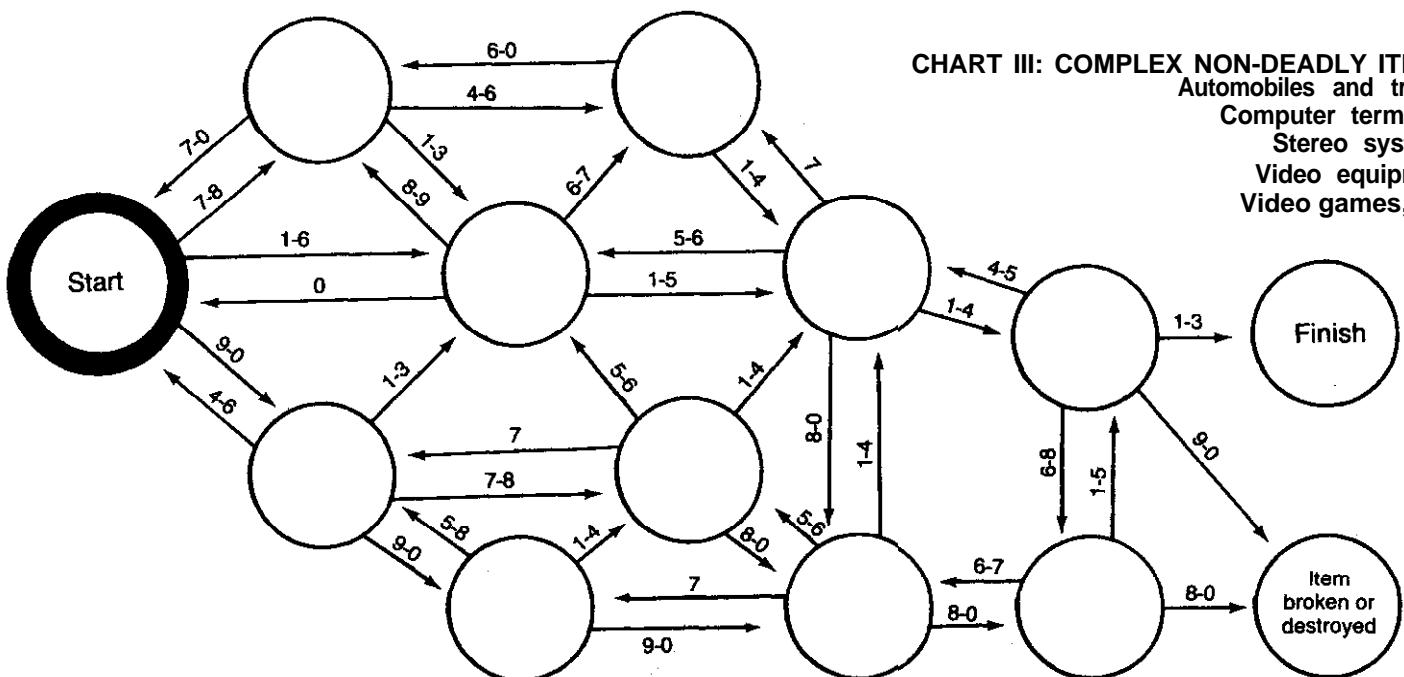
**CHART II: SIMPLE NON-DEADLY ITEMS**

Bicycles  
Mopeds  
TVs and radios  
Flashlights  
Cigarette lighters, etc.



**CHART III: COMPLEX NON-DEADLY ITEMS**

Automobiles and trucks  
Computer terminals  
Stereo systems  
Video equipment  
Video games, etc.



## PEOPLE AND REACTIONS

The natives of London will generally not react favorably to a party that remains in full battle array as it wanders about the city. Until such time as PCs manage to blend in with the crowd, either by magic or by buying or stealing ordinary-looking clothing, their unusual appearance will draw attention to them.

The presence of non-humans in the adventuring group will affect the reactions of London citizens. Elves and half-elves will prove to be an asset, for their exotic appearance and often unearthly beauty will entrance onlookers, sometimes to the point that the rest of the party will be ignored. The presence of a half-orc will automatically result in the opposite response; if the half-orc's charisma or comeliness is 8 or less, a disguise will be required in public, lest some good people run screaming from the horror in their midst. Halflings will often go unnoticed, as they look very much like human children in general appearance — even more so when clothed to blend in with the crowd. Dwarves and gnomes will attract attention, but only because of their size, and then only for a short time.

Any party spending time in public in full "fantasy" regalia will attract the attention of police. Inquiries will be made as to the film company that the PCs are with, and if this proves fruitless, the bobbie(s) will attempt to convince the party that they are not wearing appropriate clothing. There is a good chance (DM's decision on exact odds) that the entire party will be considered of questionable sanity, and reinforcements will be sent for to take them to the Royal Hospital for examination. While London police are generally calm and friendly, and can be counted on to endure strange people and events with little reaction, they do have their limits.

One of those limits is weapons. Weapons openly displayed (even if sheathed) will immediately bring police trouble. The bobbie will call for backup and will attempt to bring the party to the local station-house under arrest for possession of dangerous weapons. A concealment charge is likely if the weapons were sheathed, or worn, as is the case with many thieves and magic-users, up sleeves or in boots and belts. Resisting arrest and escaping police will put the party on a "wanted" list, with warnings that they are armed and considered mentally unsound. If PCs go out *en masse* after being placed on such a list, they may quickly be identified by police anywhere in the city (100% if they are still in their original garb, 65% even if they have changed to local clothes). Shortly thereafter, they will be surrounded by a large (2-4 times the party's size) armed force. For individuals going out alone or in small groups, there is only a 5% chance per person (cumulative) of being identified.

Except where otherwise indicated in the building keys, the following applies to the remainder of London as long as the party members remain in their original garb: as

long as no violence or magic use occurs, public reaction will be neutral, tending towards negative (-25% on reaction rolls for encountered individuals). There will be a general assumption that the party is either a publicity stunt, part of a movie being filmed, or simply a more outrageous than usual punk gang. The closer the PCs get to parks and other areas of London where unusual dress is the norm, the less negative the average reaction will be (-10% on reaction rolls within 3 blocks of parks and plazas, no adjustment when in the parks and plazas themselves).

Combat or fatal violence of any sort will cause panic in onlookers and bring police and reporters, as will major displays of magic (*fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, or anything with lots of "special effects"). Once such a panic is caused, the undisguised party or individual PC will not be able to travel anywhere in the city afterward without a similar panic and its attendant attentions starting. Given time to get to know PCs, citizens may eventually come to overlook their exotic abilities and origins. However, most will not want to take the time.

As to special subgroups in the population, well, punks will embrace PCs for what they will see as the ultimate rebellion against modern society. Major criminals and terrorists who have a chance to calmly evaluate the party's capabilities will find advantages for themselves, and plot accordingly. Muggers and the like will hesitate to assault a fully outfitted party, although PCs in disguise are just as likely as anybody else to be victims of an attempted robbery.

One final topic: language. Unless the DM assumes that the common tongue is virtually identical to modern English, the PCs will not be able to communicate with any local citizens. The use of spells, magical items, and the like will help overcome this handicap, but the DM should always keep the language barrier in mind. (How do you ask for a restroom, for instance?)

If the language barrier is deemed too great a hurdle, the DM may declare that passage through the *gate* alters a character's memory of language. The common tongue is instantly translated into English when the character reaches London; the reverse transformation of English into common occurs when the character passes back through the *gate* into the AD&D game world.

## MAGIC MODIFICATIONS

The alternate universe in which London can be found exists on the Prime Material Plane of the AD&D multiverse, one of the many such alternates (others include Midgard, from the module *Aesirhamar*, DRAGON® issue #92, and the worlds connected to the Demonweb in AD&D Module Q1, *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*). However, there is something odd about it. Nearly everywhere in the multiverse, save for a few other "freak" planes, the laws of magic rule. The plane that London is on is something of an ignored backwater uni-

verse, for it is solidly connected to the rest of the Prime Material, Astral, and Ethereal Planes at only a few points, and is at best tenuously connected with the rest of the Inner Planes, and almost not at all with the Outer Planes. (This was one of the main reasons that the *Mace* was hidden there.)

Because it is so weakly connected to the rest of the magical multiverse, Earth has no magic. There is no leakage of the extra-planar energies that cause the evolution of magical and semi-magical creatures and that produce the oddities which stimulate human research into magic. Because of its isolation, Earth is magically null. As a result of this, some spells will function differently or not at all in London. The following sections cover all the spells found in the AD&D *Players Handbook*, as well as those published in DRAGON Magazine during the last few years. (Some of these also appear in *Unearthed Arcana*). If a spell is not listed below, assume that it works normally unless the nature of the spell dictates otherwise.

One special note: Remember that the people inhabiting London generally have no experience with illusions. Therefore, they initially receive no saving throws to disbelieve them. Repeated exposure to illusionary displays may allow for saving throws, and some citizens may believe they are viewing an advanced form of laser hologram or are hallucinating instead of seeing "real" magic.

### Cleric spells

*Astral* spell is severely limited. The spell will function as long as travel by it is only through the Astral Plane and around London's plane; any attempts to reach other planes (including the party's home) will fail.

*Ceremony (consecrate item)* will not work because it implies the attention of the god or the deity's servants for the investiture of the holy aura. *Holy symbol* will not function for the same reason.

*Commune, divination, and spiritual hammer* will not function because the cleric is beyond the reach of his god for the time he is in London. The cleric will realize this before casting the spell.

*Dust devil* will fail 50% of the time, because the connections between London's plane and the Elemental Planes are so tenuous that only the smallest and weakest elemental beings can find a path large enough to allow them passage. For this reason, all greater summonings (such as *aerial servant*) will fail.

*Gate and Negative Plane protection* will not function because of the separation of Earth from other planes.

*Magical vestment* will not work unless the cleric casting it has established in London an appropriately consecrated area of his own religion at least the size of a chapel.

*Word of recall* will not return a cleric to a sanctuary on a plane different from that of Earth; it is possible, though, for a sanctuary to be designated in the modern universe and thus allow the spell to be used there.

## Druid spells

*Call woodland beings* is useless. There are no such beings to call in the vicinity of London.

*Chariot of Sustarre, conjure fire elemental, and conjure earth elemental* will not function because of their Elemental Plane connections, as explained in the section on the cleric spell *dust devil*. *Fire storm* is likewise partially elemental in source, and will fail 25% of the time.

*Reflecting pool* will not be able to scry beyond the universe in which London lies.

*Reincarnate* will not result in the reincarnation of a character in a magical or semi-magical form, such as a faun, centaur, etc., that is not native to Earth.

## Magic-user spells

All cantrips function normally.

*Astral spell*: See the cleric spell of the same name.

*Cacodemon* will not function, as the Abyss cannot be contacted from Earth.

*Conjure elemental* will not work, as described for the cleric spell *dust devil*. For obvious reasons, *distance distortion* is also useless.

*Contact other plane* will not work. See the cleric spell *commune*.

*Demand*: See *sending*.

*Drawmij's instant summons* will not work for items on other planes.

*Energy drain* will not function because it requires a stronger connection to the Negative Material Plane than the modern world possesses.

*Ensnarement* will create a planar opening elsewhere on London's plane, and a random human, animal, or alien will step through it rather than the targeted creature. The spell will continue to function as though the desired being had been *ensnared*, though.

*Find familiar* will locate no special familiars, and the only normal familiars available in the vicinity of London will be black cats, crows, and toads. Treat all other results as "no familiar available."

*Gate* will not function (see cleric spell).

*Invisible stalker* will not function; see cleric spell *dust devil*.

*Leomund's secret chest*, if sent from the home universe, cannot be retrieved in London. If one is placed in the Ethereal Plane from the modern world, it will be lost if the caster does not retrieve it before going home.

*Magic mirror* has limited effect. See druid spell *reflecting pool*.

*Maze* will fail 25% of the time, but when successfully cast, it will have double duration because the isolation of London's universe allows a larger extradimensional maze to form.

*Monster summonings* (all levels) will not work because there are no monsters in or near London.

*Protection from normal missiles* will provide an impenetrable barrier against bullets and grenade fragments — the best bulletproof vest one could want. In similar

fashion, *shield* will still act to improve the recipient's armor class, and is thus also handy to have when the lead starts to fly.

*Reincarnation*: See the druid spell *reincarnate*.

*Sending* acts as though London is six planes removed from any other Prime Material alternate due to its isolation; *sendings* beyond the Prime Material Plane also operate with this six-plane initial handicap — i.e., if one sends a message to an Elemental Plane, there is a base 35% ( $5\% \times 6$  plane removal handicap, plus 5% for an actual planar displacement) of an unsuccessful *sending*.

*Wall of stone* will meld into concrete slabs and bricks, as well as clay bricks, cinder blocks, and asphalt.

## Illusionist spells

Purely illusionary spells (*phantasmal force, create illusion, and the like*) work automatically on all natives of London, no saving throw allowed, as noted above.

*Astral spell*: See the cleric spell of the same name.

*Demi-shadow magic* and *shadow magic* victims who fail their saving throws take only one-half normal damage.

*Magic mirror*: See the druid spell *reflecting pool*.

*Maze*: See the magic-user spell of the same name.

*Shadow monsters, demi-shadow monsters, and shades* will produce monsters that have one-half the given hit points and inflict half the given damage against victims who make their saving throws, due to the remote position of London with respect to the Plane of Shadow.

*Shadow walk* will function correctly only 50% of the time; 25% of the time it will fail outright, and the other 25% of the time it will leave the illusionist (and his companions, if any) stranded on the borders of the Plane of Shadow.

*Summon shadow* will not function because of the remote connections between London and other planes.

*Vision* will not function (see cleric spell *commune*).

## CLOSING INFORMATION

Characters will probably travel on foot for the majority of this adventure; assume for this purpose that PCs travel at a constant rate of 4 mph for large-scale tracking. Otherwise, use standard movement rates for dungeon scale. Of course, chases, running and hiding, and the like will alter these movement rates.

Characters will eventually encounter British economics while in London, if the DM is doing his job correctly. The British pound sterling (£) is made up of ten shillings, each of which is in turn composed of ten pennies (pence). Most prices in the modern milieu should equal the *Players Handbook* gold piece price in pounds, except where such prices would be ridiculously high or low. Peddlers and costers will sometimes sell their goods at substantial

discounts. Let common sense be your guide here, and remember that for most consumer goods, British prices are close to American ones. At the time that this module takes place (June 1985), £1 is roughly equal to \$1.33. If the DM wishes to have more contemporary values, he should check with local banks on the current exchange rates.

Adventurers will probably be unfamiliar with the concept of paper money, travelers checks, and bank accounts, but coins from an AD&D universe are not going to be valid currency in London. PCs must exchange their coins for pounds if they intend to spend their money in the city. The following exchange rates will be in effect for the duration of the party's stay in London. Roll variations in exchange rate every few days or so in order to simulate various current economic pressures and shifts.

AD&D coin	Value in British pounds
Copper	1-5 shillings per 10 cp
Silver	£6 + 1d4 per sp
Electrum	See below
Gold	£150+1d10 per gp
Platinum	£320 + 1d20 per pp

Electrum is a gold-silver alloy that is rarely seen or used. Assume that most banks will be unfamiliar with it and will not be willing or able to trade pounds for electrum coins. If a jeweler or metalsmith is contacted, electrum may be sold for varying amounts (£10-100 per ep). Fantastic metals like mithral or adamantine will bring varying prices, depending upon the DM's whims.

American Express and other similar institutions, located throughout London, will give 100% of cash value; jewelers and others will offer 60%. Either way, even the poorest character will be well off here, thanks to the gold-rich and inflationary economies of most fantasy-campaign worlds.

Thieves are going to have trouble with modern cylinder locks, since they are beyond medieval state of the art. To simulate the impact this new technology will have on thief PCs, do the following. For the purposes of picking modern locks, all thieves are regarded as being 1st level. For each modern lock they successfully pick, they regain one level of experience in lock picking until they return to their original level of expertise. Combination locks will stymie thieves with an intelligence of less than 15, but those with an intelligence of 15 or better will progress as with normal locks, except that they cannot progress farther than two levels below their actual level for picking combination locks.

The location and disarming of traps is another matter entirely. Until informed by anyone familiar with what technological burglar detection/prevention devices look like, thieves will have no chance whatsoever to detect them, let alone remove them. However, once a thief is given a sufficiently detailed and accurate description, the detection of technological traps such as photosen-

sors and motion detectors is handled in the same manner as lock-picking. When instructed by one who is knowledgeable in how to disarm such a unit, the thief will still have only a 10% chance to deactivate it (dexterity and racial bonuses do not apply here). Failure on this roll indicates that the device is immediately set off.

On a larger scale of problems, there are the following: First, there is a time differential between the two sides of the *gate*. The ratio is roughly one day (London) to one month (AD&D universe). Thus, if PCs spend any significant length of time in London, they may be thought dead and the usual procedures (reading of wills, selling of property, whatever else is done depending on the milieu) will be performed. The PCs will NOT find any information that suggests that this time differential exists before they step through the *gate*; let them find out on their own.

This is unlikely to occur, though, because

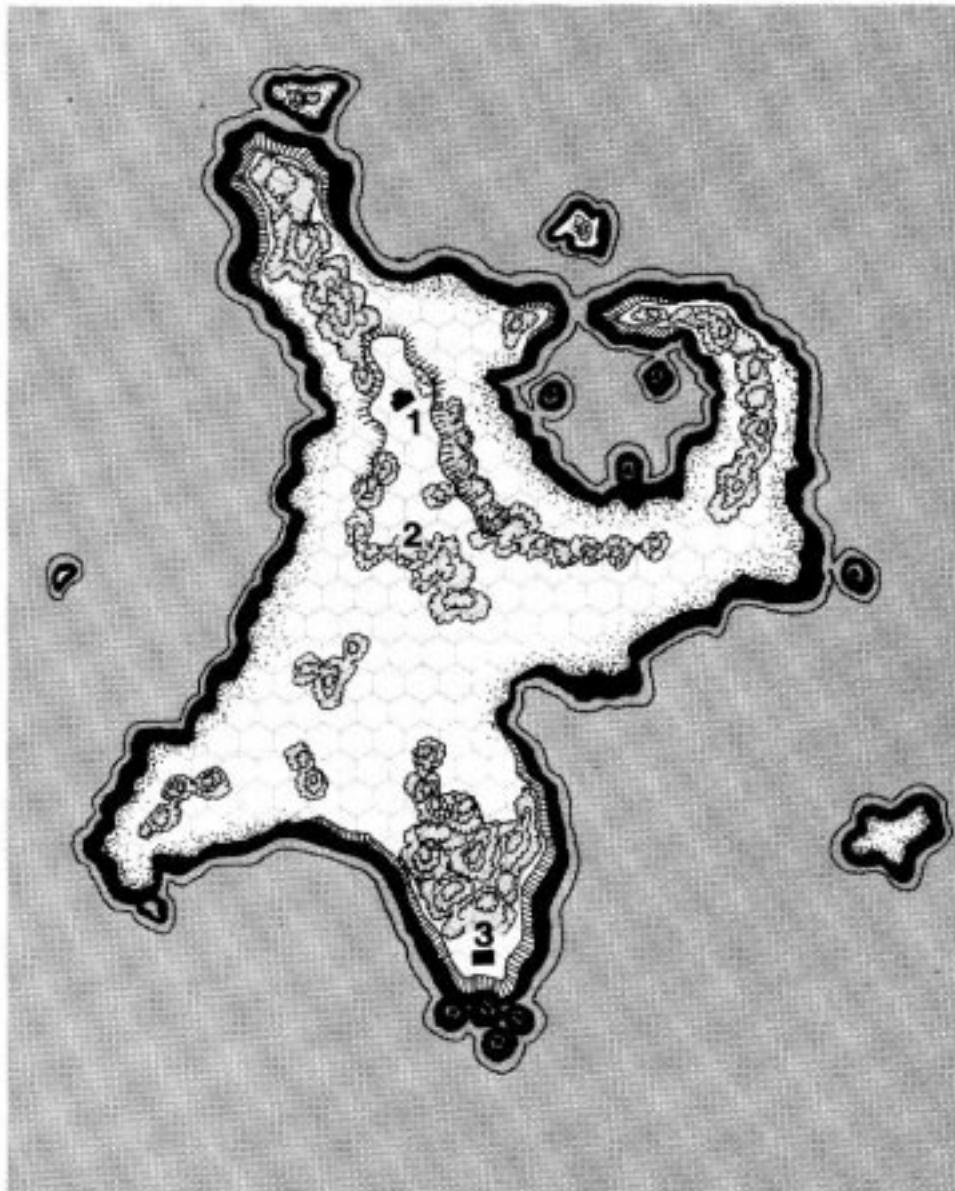
of the second problem. Because of this universe's isolation from the magical energies of the multiverse, those influences which allow AD&D game characters to be more powerful than modern men will be lacking. Like a vitamin deficiency weakening a person's body, the lack of these vital environmental factors will eventually cause a loss of energy (experience) levels in PCs who remain in London too long. After the first month (should the party stay so long), all characters will begin to lose one level per week until they return to their home universe. Excursions to the Astral or Ethereal Planes will, on a one-time basis, delay this weakening for one month, but will not prevent it. Once home, characters will immediately start to regain levels at the same rate at which they were lost.

One further point before the adventure begins. The map provided covers but a small portion of the city of London, although many major sites of interest are

included. Characters may express an interest in wandering beyond the edges of these maps. It is not recommended that they be allowed to do so — even if you, the DM, have the resources and inclination to let them gallivant all over the British Isles. They have a mission to complete, and they will start to feel weak after a while, too, so short-circuit the PCs any time they try to move outside the module's area of focus. The sudden appearance of blue police vans in front of the party is a most effective, if unsubtle, means of accomplishing this; even encounters that might have otherwise been mere casual run-ins can become important enough to distract the players. After all, London is a modern city, full of the hustle and bustle of the crowd and the Crown. There will always be something happening somewhere, something to interest the party. Keep them interested in London — don't give them a chance to wonder about areas not on the map.

Good luck. And now . . .

## The gate island



Scale: 1 hex is  
100 feet wide

## The City Beyond the Gate

### THE SCENARIO

There are a number of possible opening scenarios, but they are almost all variants of two basic situations, given below.

1) Over the course of several adventures, the adventuring party accumulates a number of scraps of information regarding the *Mace*. Most are legend and hearsay, but two or three seem to suggest the location of the *Mace*'s hiding place, and one hints of an extra-planar location. Research on the little solid information available yields the location of a small island relevant to the quest, in a nearby sea or ocean.

2) In exchange for a needed resurrection, *regeneration*, or similar favor, the party undertakes the recovery of the *Mace* for a high-level cleric or deity's servant. The adventurers are given an enigmatic map which displays an island and gives its approximate location. Optionally, the party may be *geased* by the cleric to perform the mission.

In either case above, it is up to the party to obtain a ship or other passage to the island, as well as appropriate equipment to conduct the search for the *Mace*.

### THE GATE ISLAND

At the location given in their sources, the characters do find an island. Approximately half a mile long north to south, it has a lagoon guarded by two high cliffs to the northeast, promontories at both the north and south ends, and a high plateau in the center. Some forested areas exist, especially around the base of the plateau, but the isle is predominantly grass-covered or white sand beach. Upon the plateau can be seen a simple white house, while on the south cliff, a small temple-like building stands in partial ruin.

The lagoon is the best place to anchor a ship, as it is sheltered and calm, its clear

waters revealing white sand (and no dangers) below. Upon the party's anchoring here (or at any other spot off the island, for that matter), two young women will be seen on the shore, hailing the ship. Both are red-haired and beautiful, and will introduce themselves as Selvana and Lilith (not their real names); they request that all seekers for that which is of Law accompany them to their humble home. They are modest and kind, and are actually Type V demons polymorphed into human shape: AC -5 (torso)/-7 (tail), MV 12", HD 7 + 7, hp 40 and 43, ATT: 6 weapons/1 constrict, DAM: by weapon/2d4, MR: 80% hit only by +1 or better weapons, psionic (see below); numerous special spell powers (see *Monster Manual* for details). If a cleric attempts to banish these demons (by rolling the score for "special" on the "Turning Undead" table), he will receive a +1 bonus to the roll due to the residual aura of Good which still permeates this place.

Each of these two demons has the following psionic powers: *clairvoyance*, *detection of magic*, and *aura alteration*. The latter power will be used at all times when the party is nearby, as the demons will be concealing their alignment (causing their auras to radiate as lawful good). Anyone with psionic powers will sense the use of psionics from the two demon-ladies, but will not be able to tell what powers are being employed by them. If asked, the demons will say that they are protecting themselves — their isle is sought after by many evil creatures, and one cannot be too careful.

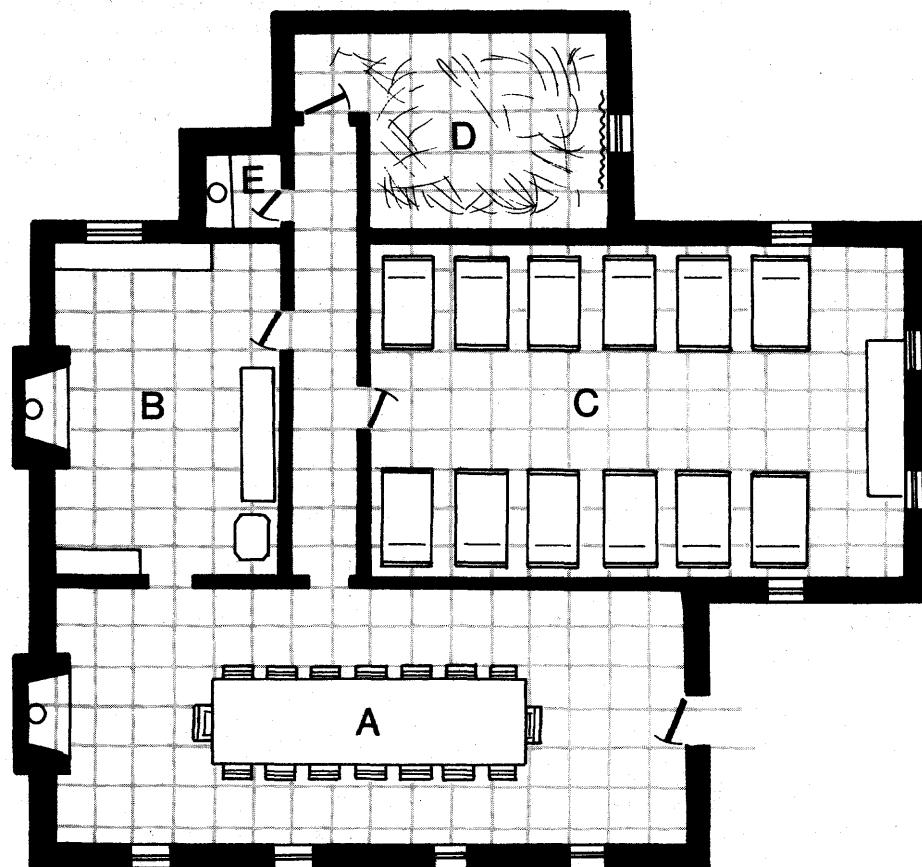
The demons were sent to the isle fifty years ago by an unnamed demon prince (or, optionally, the leading chaotic evil deity in the current campaign). After destroying the garrison by surprise, they established themselves to kill off any other adventurers who happened to come upon the isle. Unless attacked, the demon-ladies will quietly lead the party to their home, the small white house glimpsed from the ship. If possible, they will attempt to *charm* the adventurers secretly, one by one, and will *detect invisible* objects to make sure no one is creeping up on them (though they will not act as if they see anything unusual if they do see a hiding thief or *invisible* magic-user).

1. The white stone house was built of local fieldstone and whitewashed. This simple structure has the look of a farmhouse that has withstood many decades, maybe even centuries of sea air and weather. There are four rooms to this building.

A: Sitting/dining room. The centerpiece of this room is a massive table surrounded by a dozen chairs. It is well-worn as if many a feast had been presented here before. The room is lit by oil lamps suspended from brackets on the stucco walls, which are decorated with a great many weapons: polearms, swords, and daggers of varying ages and manufacture. Twelve weapons have no dust on them: six each of battleaxes and bastard swords. These are the demons' weapons. Should they be attacked anywhere

# Island house

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



else on the island, the demons will *teleport* here and assume their demonic forms to wield their weapons. If a major party is fighting against them, the demons will take the time to *summon* 1-3 extra demons each (only of types I-IV) to assist in the attack on the party.

B: Kitchen. This room is furnished as a fine kitchen, slightly better than such a simple structure would suggest, with enough cooking utensils and food storage to feed a small garrison. A coldbox is set into the floor in one corner, refrigerated by a small spring that wells up nearby and provides water for the whole house. The coldbox is large enough to hold four human-sized creatures. On a high shelf in the opposite corner of the room, hidden from direct view by several canisters of spices, are five unlabeled potion bottles that contain the first part of a two-stage poison. This bottled substance is harmless by itself, but becomes deadly when combined with the second part (see below). Note that a spell or power that detects poison will fail to register this substance (or the second part of the poison) as dangerous.

C: Sleeping quarters for the party. Again, this room looks to have served a small troop of people at one time or another, for the room has a dozen beds. It is lit by candles in sconces on the walls. These candles are impregnated with the second part of the two-stage poison found in area B. As before, this part of the poison is harmless unless mixed with the first part above. The

demons will light the candles in this room before the party retires for bed that night.

D: The demons' quarters. This room appears to be a very plain room with simple, hard beds and a small shrine, but this is a *permanent illusion*. The room actually contains two large nests in which the demons rest while in their natural forms. Entering the room will not dispel the illusion, which possesses tactile and olfactory components; it requires a deliberate effort to disbelieve the room's contents to gain a saving throw. Scattered and mixed in with the rubbish of the nests are the following items, all belonging to the demons' previous victims: 20,000 gp, 14 gems, a gold armlet worth 2500 gp, a platinum necklace inset with emeralds worth 10,000 gp, a *chime of opening* with 20 charges left, three jars of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and a scroll of seven magic-user spells: *mass charm*, *crystalbrittle symbol*, *contact other plane*, *time stop*, *ice storm*, and *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*.

The demons will invite the party to stay with them and prepare themselves for their search for the *Mace*, and will cook them a sumptuous meal, liberally laced with the first part of the two-stage poison. The second part (as mentioned before) is in the candles in the party's quarters, and anyone breathing the air therein within ten hours of ingesting the first component of the poison will suffer the following effects. First, fatigue will set in within 1-2 hours, causing characters to save vs. death magic or fall

asleep for 5-10 hours. Those who save will be groggy and will fight at -2 "to hit," and will lose all dexterity bonuses to armor class. The characters will also be severely weakened, their strength scores falling by 3-6 points for 2-5 hours before they fully recover. Characters who fall asleep cannot be awakened for the first 2-5 hours of sleep, except by a *neutralize poison* or *wish*. The demons will attack as soon as all party members are so drugged. If no one eats of the demons' food, the demons will act offended but will say they understand (and they will attack the party at the best possible opportunity afterwards).

If the demons are destroyed or dispelled, a spirit will appear (treat as similar to a haunt from *Monster Manual II*, except that it cannot possess characters and is able to communicate with living beings). The spirit will take the form of an old but robust man in the garb of a cleric. Identifying himself as Girard, a priest of St. Cuthbert, he will explain that he is the original guardian of the *gate*, and headed a garrison of troops housed in the white house to protect the way to the *Mace* from those who would destroy it. He and his troops were murdered by the demons, who took his place to ensure that no force of Good would reach the *Mace*. While his troops were taken to their reward above, Girard was charged to remain until the demons were vanquished. To show his power, he will *resurrect* any two good-aligned party members slain in the battle with the demons. He will then lead the party to the "mace detector" and the *gate*.

2. A small cave hidden by brush is the first place to which the spirit of Girard leads the party. It is a tiny opening in the side of the plateau, curtained by the scrub and bushes that surround the base. Unless led there by Girard, only rangers, elves, and half-elves have a chance to notice this cave (2% chance per level for rangers, normal chance of noticing concealed doors for elves and half-elves). The demons never found this cave, being more interested in protecting the isle than in exploring it.

The cave is small and cramped, with room enough for only two people and Girard. (A third can be fitted, but that would mean someone would have to stand in the same place as the spirit — an unnerving but harmless experience.) The cave's stone floor has a thaumaturgic triangle, inlaid with gold (12 gp worth), inscribed thereon. At the center of the triangle is a short wooden post surmounted by what appears to be a 6-inch elliptical disk of white quartz, with the emblem of a mace engraved on the end of one long axis.

This disk, Girard will tell the party, is the device that will lead them to the *Mace of Cuthbert* on the other side of the *gate*. It will flash a blue-white light at a rate dependent upon the nearness of the *Mace* — 10 flashes per minute for a mile or more distance, 20 per minute down to 1/2 mile, 40 per minute down to 1/4 mile, 80 per minute

between 1/4 and 1/8 mile, and 120 flashes per minute when between 1/8 mile and 200'. At closer than 200', the mace detector gives off a continuous glow. The brightness of the light emitted is relative to the facing of the crystal's engraved mace end toward the *Mace*. That is, the glow is brightest when it is facing in the direction of the *Mace*, and it is darkest when it faces ninety degrees or more away.

3. The *gate* building is the ruined temple that could be seen from the ship when rounding the south end of the island. When the adventurers near the structure, they will see that it is actually built in the form of an open, Parthenon-like structure with randomly laid stone blocks about it that make the building appear from a distance to be crumbling. The two demons have explored this building before, but having no means to open or control the *gate*, they have left it alone.

The interior of this structure is quite empty and clean, as if it were swept regularly. It is bare of all furnishings and ornamentation, save for a massive stone arch in the exact center of the floor. This 12' tall, 10' wide arch is the magical, interplanar *gate* leading to London. Girard tells the party that the *gate* opens from either side by holding the detector disk toward it and commanding, "Open!" After wishing the party luck and performing a benediction, the spirit will go to his well-deserved rest.

Unless otherwise garrisoned by the player characters and their servants, the island will probably be uninhabited by any intelligent creatures while the party is adventuring through the *gate*. See, however, the section at the end of this module on closing the adventure.

#### BEYOND THE GATE

Once through the *gate*, the party members will find themselves on a wooded isle in a small lake with lightly wooded shores. Beyond the young trees on the lakeshore can be seen open fields in which there seems to be scattered public recreational activity.

The characters have *gated* in on the major island in the Boating Lake of Battersea Park, London, south of the Thames River and one of the many parks in the city. The party will exit the *gate* through an arch exactly like the one on Gate Island, except that this one has a small plaque on one side that reads: "Sculpture donated by Hon. Edward Cuthbert — 1932." If perchance some PCs search for records pertaining to Edward Cuthbert, they will find that no such records exist. Given the time differen-

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#### How to read the map key

The large map on pages 56-57 is keyed with two sets of numbers. The numbers 1 through 7 printed inside squares refer to locations described in the "Beyond the *Gate*" text section, and the numbers 1 through 9 printed inside circles refer to locations described in the "Large-Scale Map" section that begins on page 59.

tial between the universes, the *gate* between London and the current campaign world has been established for over 640 years (reckoning by the fantasy world's years).

The weather will initially be clear, bright, and sunny. The London time is 9 a.m., June 1, 1985 (or the current time when this scenario is played out). If desired, the DM may have the weather patterns follow that currently experienced in either London or in the nearest major city, so long as such conditions would logically occur in London (no monsoons, tornadoes, etc.). No other people will be on the island when the PCs first appear, though future scenarios may not allow the party to be so lucky.

1. Battersea Park is slightly larger than the average London park in size, lightly wooded around the edges and around the lakes, with the central east-west lane lined with trees. The remainder of the park is open grassy meadow. Its many paths make it a popular locale for horseback riding. The area called "The Festival Pleasure Gardens" is a collection of buildings including a bandstand, a small amphitheatre, stables, refreshment stands, and the like.

Once the party gets off the island, they will encounter a police officer (end-level fighter, AC 9, hp 12, armed with billy club) grappling with a blonde girl about twelve years old. The police officer will be swearing at her as she kicks his shins and yells for help, insisting "I ain't done nothing!" The girl is named Charlotte; she is a street urchin and a 3rd-level thief (see the description of Charlotte at the end of this module). She is armed with a slingshot and 20 stones (treat as sling stone for range, doing 1-2/1 points of damage).

If the party does not interfere, the police officer will eventually wrestle Charlotte into submission and cart her off into the city. The bobbie will be so intent on this that he is only 15% likely to notice the party. If the PCs decide to get involved, the officer will be so astounded by their appearance that he will let go of Charlotte (who will immediately hide behind the nearest PC and put on a very innocent-looking expression) and will be dazed for one round. Once he recovers, he will attempt to get the girl back, politely at first, then becoming progressively more threatening. If his threats are answered or topped, he will retreat and report the party to the nearest station house (thus making them subject to arrest if identified). He does not want the girl desperately enough to try fighting it out with the PCs who confront him.

If the group thus successfully defends Charlotte, she will thank them, tell them that they've gotten themselves in trouble with the "woolies," and offer them a place to hide. Should the party not accept the offer, she will repeat it, more urgently, and if the PCs still decline, she will reluctantly leave them. There is a 15% chance that any subsequent street urchin encounter will include Charlotte, who will repeat her offer; also, should the PCs find themselves in a

(Text continues on page 59)

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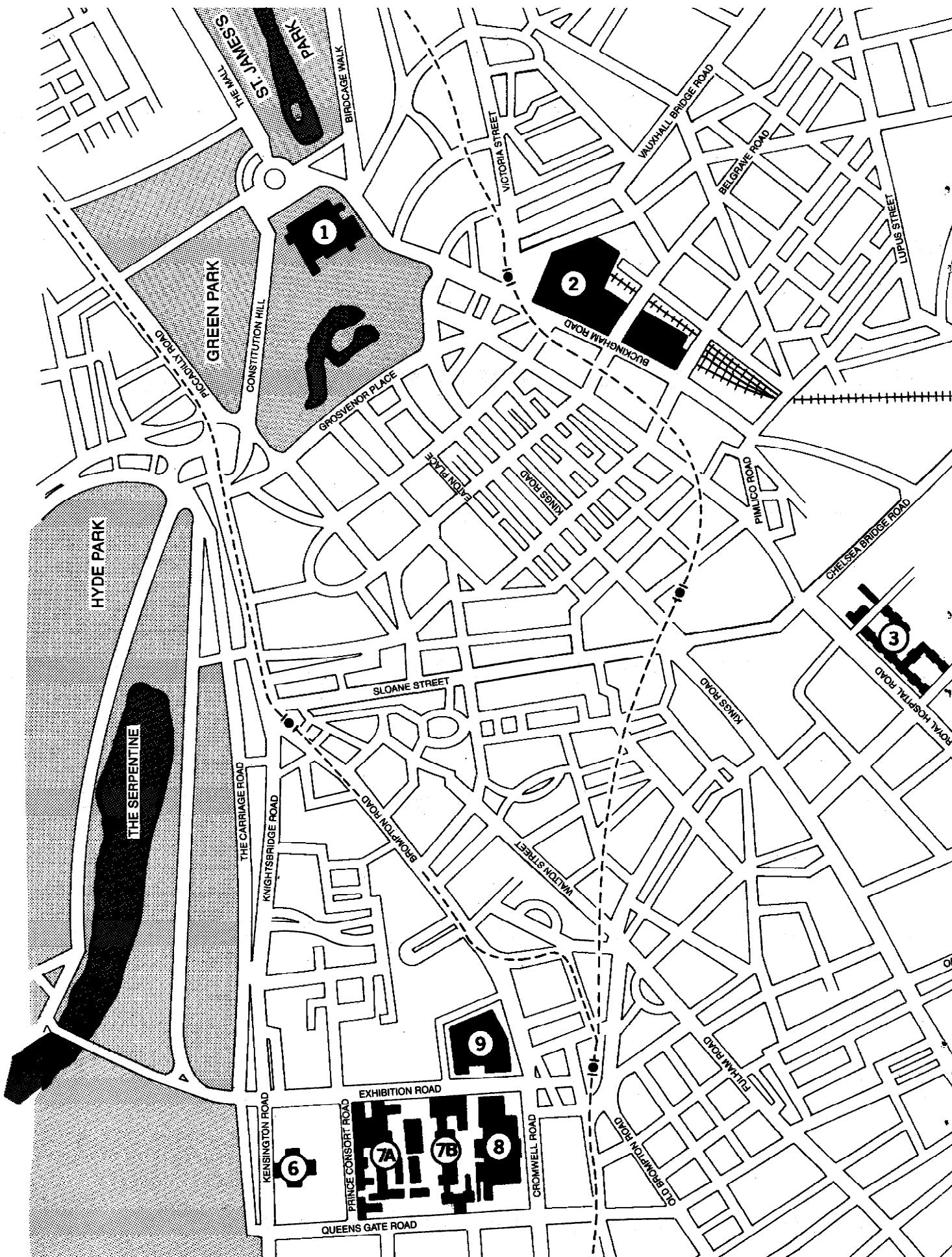
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# LONDON

Neighborhoods of Brompton, Belgravia, Pimlico, Battersea, and Wandsworth

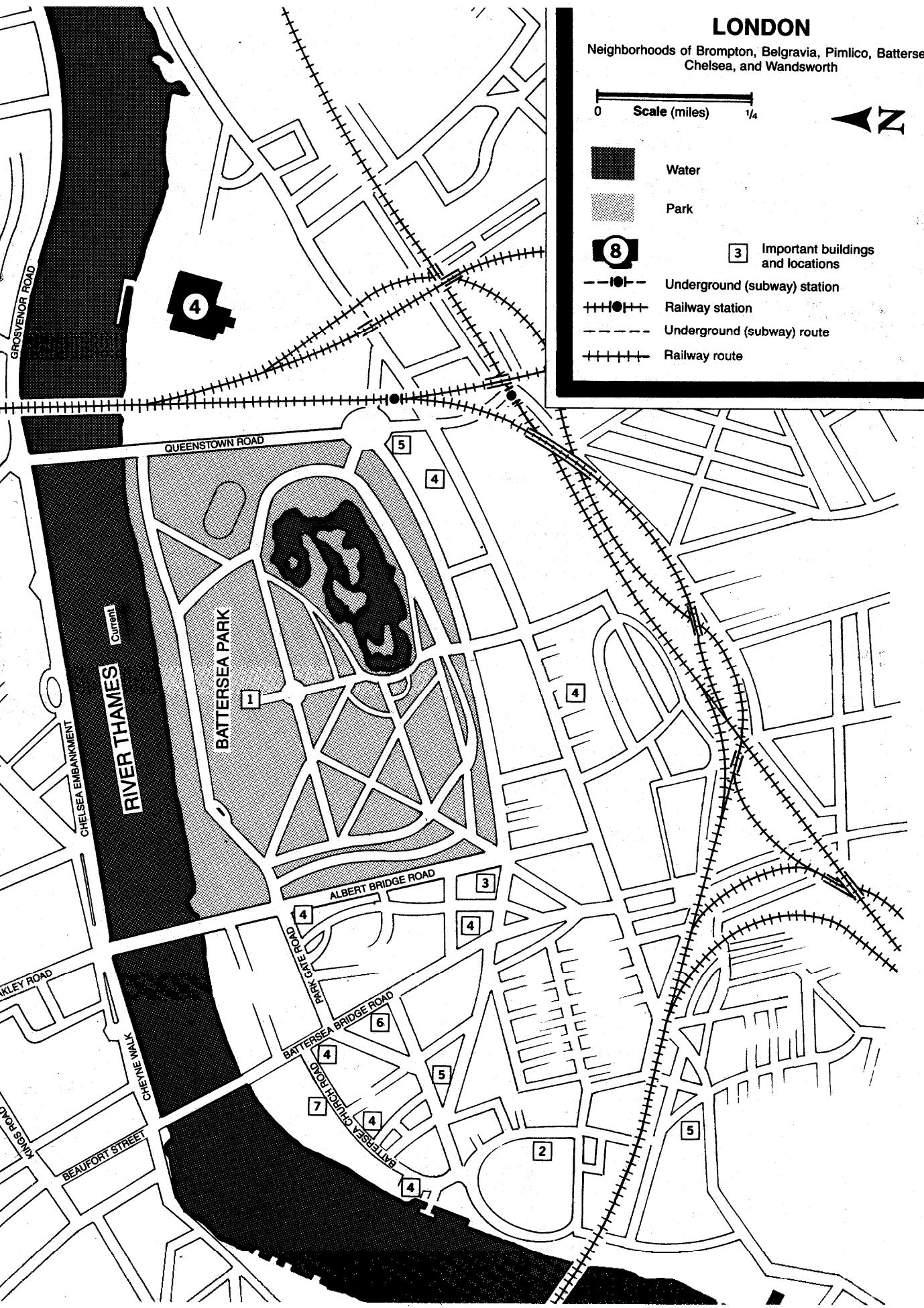
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Water

Park

- 8** Important buildings and locations
- - - - - Underground (subway) station
- + + + - Railway station
- - - - - Underground (subway) route
- + + + + Railway route



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serious situation, there is a 20% chance that Charlotte will appear to offer help.

If the party accepts her offer, she will remain with the party (unless convinced or forced to do otherwise) for the duration of their stay in London. All urchins encountered by PCs while she accompanies them will be automatically well disposed to them because of her influence.

2. Abandoned house. This is a large, three-story building with fading grey and black paint on Battersea High Street. Near the top are painted the letters "Bunham Patent Locks, Ltd." It has apparently been empty for years, but it is now home for Charlotte and two of her friends: Nicky, a tousle-haired lad of twelve years, and Rocco, a black youth of about eleven (see the descriptions given at the end of this adventure). While most of the house is in acceptable condition, the children inhabit the basement because it is easier to keep light from leaking out of its small windows at night. Charlotte will lead the party here, where it is comfortable and there's enough room for everyone on its floor. There will be some argument between Charlotte and her roommates over food and room, but she will win out in the end.

The house is entered through a broken cellar door in the rear of the building. In a closet on the third floor of this house can be found Charlotte's secret cache of books: *La Morte d'Arthur*, *Ivanhoe*, *Robin Hood*, and a number of modern swords-and-sorcery novels and novel trilogies.

If communication can be established with the children, they will ask the party hundreds of questions concerning their business in London, their homes, their equipment, and anything else the DM can imagine. If the party reveals any information on their true mission and origins (and can demonstrate a little magic), the children will do everything they can to help the adventurers without risking their lives directly. The children will be tempted to steal a few minor items from the group, but if well treated, they will return the items after a short inspection.

3. Doctor's office. In this building is the office of Dr. Andrew Bainbridge. He is in his sixties, and treats the street children free of charge out of concern for their well-being, and because he once lived in the streets as a boy. The children in return respect him and consider him a friend. They trust him implicitly and he has never betrayed them or their trust. However, he is a law-abiding man, and if PCs are brought to him and they are wanted by the police, he will feel obligated to turn them in should he recognize them.

Dr. Andrew Bainbridge is treated as a sage (AC 10, hp 24, no attacks) with the special categories of human biology and human psychology, plus a minor field of chemistry. He possesses 1st-level thief skills (left over from his days as an urchin). He can immediately restore 1-6 lost hit points

through wound treatment, with a 50% chance for an additional 1-4 points next day, followed by normal healing rate. He can cure most acute diseases of no greater than moderate severity in 1-8 days with his prescriptions and treatments. When he does charge for treatments, his bill is on the order of £8-11.

4. Churches. A number of churches are found on the map; unless otherwise noted, 90% are Anglican churches and the remainder are Catholic.

5. Libraries. These are public libraries, holding 5,000-30,000 volumes each. While they have circulating collections, it will be unlikely that the PCs will qualify for cards. There is a 3% chance per library that there are 1-2 books on magic that could actually aid magical research.

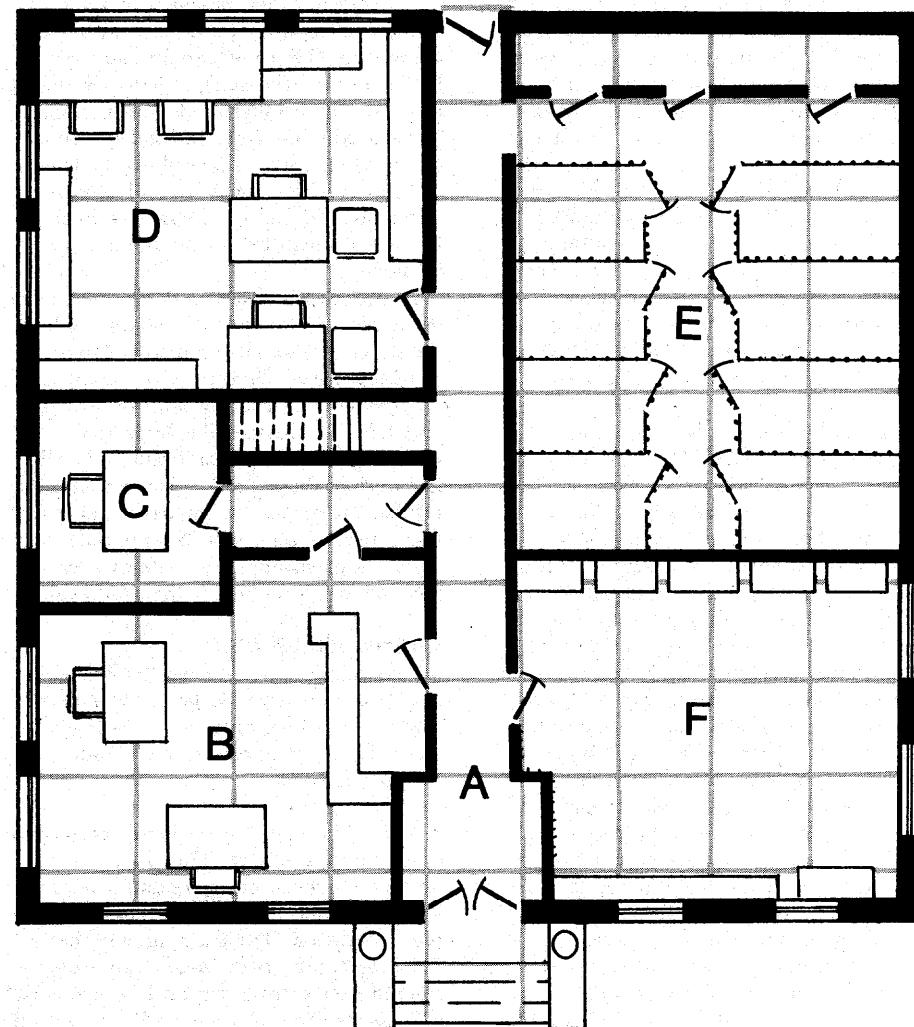
6. Battersea police station. This is the primary police station for the Battersea area, from the Thames to the park, and south to Battersea Park Road. It is detailed below, and a plan of the building is pro-

vided. If the DM is doing his job right, a PC will sooner or later end up here.

A: Entry hall. This narrow corridor is filled with traffic at all hours; there will usually be 1-4 police officers passing through every round, and 25% of the time they will be escorting prisoners. For a little excitement, allow a 5% chance per prisoner being moved that he will get free, grab a gun, and try to shoot his way out.

B: Office. This is where citizens walking in off the street will go to talk to a police representative. The room is divided by a long counter, behind which are two desks covered with paper. There are three officers in this room, unarmed. They are generally very polite and helpful.

C: Chief's office. The local captain has his office here. It is immaculate, perfectly clean and neat. The captain is something of a fanatic on cleanliness, and there is some dislike of him among the ranks because of this. PCs arrested because they were recognized as "wanted" will be brought immediately to Captain Byrne; otherwise, they will be put in the holding area (E) right after being booked (Captain Byrne: 4th-level



## Battersea police station

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

fighter, AC 9 (7 in riot gear), hp 35, LN, armed with .38 revolver). At any given time, Byrne is 60% likely to be in his office.

D: Communication and records. Two of the walls of this room are lined with filing cabinets. On the third is a switchboard and radio setup, with two officers manning it at all times. Another two officers handle the records, which includes booking all incoming prisoners and notifying London central police headquarters of their arrest. The basic booking procedure takes fifteen minutes per prisoner and includes fingerprints, photographs, and basic form-filling.

E: Holding area. This bank of cells is a temporary holding area, housing prisoners until they can be transported to the main complex elsewhere in the city (one day is the average wait). The cells are of simple iron bar construction. All prisoners will be frisked and all personal belongings are removed, tagged, and stored in the closet on the west end of the room. The cells are segregated by gender, and at any given time, they will be filled with 2-16 drunks and suspects of assorted crimes ranging from prostitution and petty theft to murder.

F: Squad Room. The area where off-duty officers rest, eat, drink coffee and tea, read newspapers, and talk. There are always 3-12 officers in this room at any time. Against the west wall is a bank of vending machines, dispensing sandwiches and drinks. Along the south wall is a row of coat hooks. Under the third coat from the left is a belt holster holding an unloaded .38 revolver. A box containing 30 bullets can be found in the right pocket of the coat. Along the east wall of the room is a weapons rack holding 3 shotguns, 4 rifles, 10 .45 caliber handguns, and 20 rounds of ammunition for each. The rack is locked with a combination lock and is constructed of steel bars and wire screening.

In a locked cabinet next to the rack hang three bulletproof vests. Made of a special plastic mesh, they will stop bullets or other projectiles (arrows, sling bullets, etc.) from any range; no real damage will be sustained, but a character wearing a vest must roll his dexterity or under on a d20 when shot to keep from being bowled over by the impact. A vest is similar to padded armor and has an encumbrance of 50 gp; it provides protection against all blunt weapons such as maces, reducing all damage from them to 1 point. However, if struck by an edged weapon, it must save as cloth vs. crushing blow at +3, or it will be pierced and the wearer will sustain damage.

50% of the officers in the station are 1st-level fighters with AC 9 and 6 hp, 35% are 2nd level with 16 hp, and 15% are 3rd level with 35 hp; all are armed with billyclubs and .38 revolvers. In the basement of the station is a generator to provide emergency power and two 50-gallon drums of gasoline to run it. Outside the building proper is a garage holding two squad cars and one van, and an adjoining stable housing three horses (treat as light warhorses, but having no effective attacks).

7. Battersea Church Road. This is not a description of a particular building, but rather a rundown of the more important or noticeable features of a street. The road is a major marketplace — one could even call it a social center — for the Battersea neighborhood. Every day the street is jammed with crowds and costers (salesmen with pushcarts) from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. It is in these crowds that Charlotte and her friends obtain their food and what little money they possess. In regard to this, there is a 5% chance per urchin (should they accompany PCs to the market) that he or she will be caught swiping something, with predictable results.

From where the Church Road starts on the Battersea Bridge Road down to where it ends at Westbridge Road, there can be found a coster or van every few feet. The most common item sold is food: there are many greengrocers with barrows holding fruits, fresh fish, large crabs, donuts, pretzels, and other foodstuffs. Ironmongery, hardware, and the like are also common. In addition to the costers, there are stalls set up along the length of the street, and the holders of these stalls often sell goods right out of the vans that they park by them. An eclectic collection of products is available; assume an 85% chance to find any particular item (within reason), at a 0-19% (d20-1) discount, after 6-60 rounds of searching.

Aside from the carts and stalls, food can be found in regular shops along the length of Church Road. All shops and taverns serve dark English beer, but they do also provide stronger beverages and foreign brands.

A junkyard is located a block down from the Bridge Road along the Thames side of the street. Beyond it is a British Army surplus store which sells knives, compasses, fatigues, and everything short of firearms and vehicles. Devices like flares and battery-powered torches (flashlights) will not work in the AD&D universe unless the DM so allows it, but compasses and other non-powered items will. Next to the surplus store is a pawnshop, where items may be pawned for up to 20% of their total value.

#### LARGE-SCALE MAP

Expanding outward from the Battersea area, we come to the larger-scale map of London, reaching north as far as Hyde Park. There are several places of interest within this area:

1. Buckingham Palace. Don't even think of letting PCs in here. This site is included on the map for atmosphere and is not in any way connected to the fulfillment of the party's mission. The entire area of the Palace grounds, as defined by the streets around it, is surrounded by a 12' stone wall with iron spikework on top. The only visible gates are in the front, facing out on the Mall, the street/park that proceeds roughly northeast parallel to St. James Park. These are the gates guarded by the famous, expressionless Coldstream Guards. There are

two guards for each of the three gates (3rd-level fighters, AC 8, hp 20, armed with rifles). The palace is closed to tours during the party's stay for various reasons.

The palace is regarded with an almost religious respect by street urchins as the place "where the Queen lives." Should the party members consider storming Buckingham Palace, any urchins with them at the time will attempt to dissuade them; should they fail in this attempt, they will quietly sneak away, not to return, while PCs ready themselves. Then, if the PCs continue with their plan, the DM should immediately throw in as many SWAT teams as it takes to convince them of the foolishness of their actions. The palace, being the home of the Royal Family, is extraordinarily well protected. For game purposes, assume an unlimited number of troops will arrive, all totally loyal to the Crown and not checking morale. Thieves trying to climb over the wall will be noted immediately by patrolling guards and arrested, if not shot; those trying to escape arrest will be fired upon.

2. Victoria Station. This is the major train station for this area of London, connecting with the subways and many lines out of the city, all more or less underground, starting at Victoria Station Square. It is a huge building, although only about half of it is concourses and other areas where the public is welcome. However, that half will be heavily populated at all times except between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.; it will be most heavily congested between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., when the London rush hours fill the building's public areas to overflowing. Off the main concourses, PCs will be noted by security guards immediately and will be escorted back to the public section unless they can give a plausible reason for their presence there.

Most trains leaving Victoria Station do not stop again in the city. Unless you plan to take on the immense job of running a campaign in England at large, do not let characters find out how to get tickets or even what the station is; tell them that the crowds are too confusing and their jostling, scurrying movement makes it impossible to get one's bearings for more than a few moments at a time. If visited at night, all facilities in the station except for a few ticket windows will be dark, and the clerks at those windows will not take favorably to customers who haven't the faintest idea where they want to go or by what trains or lines.

3. The Royal Hospital. Perhaps the largest hospital in metropolitan London, the Royal Hospital, overlooking its spacious gardens and the Thames beyond them to the south, is a massive building of grey stone nearly a quarter of a mile long, with several smaller buildings on either side of it. One of these smaller buildings serves as the hospital's psychiatric ward.

Should PCs end up in the psychiatric

ward, they will first be seen by a consulting psychiatrist, who will administer the standard ink-blot, word-association, and other tests, after which PCs will be dressed in standard hospital gowns and placed either in a ward with 5-20 other patients or in isolation if they resisted capture. What happens after this is largely up to the DM. Great potential for humor can be found here (exactly how does the psychiatrist explain an elf?), as well as suspense (how will the PCs escape?). If the PCs are wanted by the police, then they and their gear will be turned over to the authorities once it is concluded that they are no longer any real danger.

The Royal Hospital is open continuously. Because of England's socialized medicine, nearly any citizen can obtain treatment at a minimal cost. PCs, on the other hand, may have some problems with the bureaucrats who manage the hospital's paperwork. If the PC in question needs aid badly enough, he will be an "emergency room" case, with no attention paid to the paperwork until after the initial treatment. Otherwise, characters attempting to get treatment will have to fill out long forms that have questions about their places of residence, medical plan, and other information which will not be believed if answered truthfully; these forms take three turns to fill out, with a 25% chance of an error being made which requires the completion of a new set of forms. Non-emergency medical treatment will not be provided until the forms are filled. This assumes, of course, that the PCs can read and write English.

Assume that most medical treatment costs the same number of English pounds as the equivalent spell would cost in gold pieces "back home." However, the hospital's methods are not as time-effective as spells. Roll 1d4 per level of the curative spell equivalent to the treatment being performed; this gives the number of weeks the patient must stay in the hospital (except for the equivalents of *cure light wounds*, which can be administered without an extended stay and which take effect immediately). Multiply the die roll by one-eighth of the basic cost of the treatment for the cost of the stay itself. Note that modern medical technology can duplicate the effects of spells only up to *regeneration*, and that only for the reattachment of a severed limb. *Raise dead* and *resurrection* are beyond the modern doctor, except for those techniques used in surgery for reviving patients on the table.

4. Battersea Power Station. This is a typical electricity-generating plant. It is a large, grey and beige, stonish-looking building with tall smokestacks, surrounded by an 8' chain-link fence. Around the plant itself are several smaller buildings, including a depot for several sidings that extend from the main rail lines passing close to the station. There are always 8-15 (1d8 + 7) guards on duty at the gate and along the perimeter (guards: 4th-level fighters, hp 23, AC 9, armed with .357 revolvers). Perimeter

guards are accompanied by 2 guard dogs each (2HD, hp 12, AC 8, ATT 1 for 2-8).

Should the party members manage to enter the station proper, they will find massive furnaces burning coal and undefined mechanical devices that extend from them, humming and occasionally giving off steam. An unprotected character who comes within 10' of the furnaces will suffer 2-8 points of heat damage per round of closeness. Examining the mechanical devices (the generators, turbines, and steam conduits) will result in the following: heat/electrical damage of 2-16 points (75%), or the examining character will be dragged in by the machinery and crushed to death (25%; save vs. petrification for merely 4-48 points of damage). Poking around with metal or part-metal implements will result in an electric shock doing 10d6 of damage (no save).

Every turn there is a 50% chance that the party will be seen by a technician who will summon a security force of five men (5th-level fighters, hp 35, otherwise same as the guards) to escort the party to one of the smaller buildings while they call the police. Both the police and the security force will assume that the PCs are a group of terrorists and take no chances with them.

5. The Underground. The London Underground is one of the more famous subway systems in the world, and to a limited extent PCs may use it to shorten traveling times north of the Thames. At the cost of two shillings per person, the Underground will transport characters from station to station in one-tenth the time it would take for them to walk the distance. As long as characters remain on the system, it does not matter if they leave the boundaries of the map; if they stay on the train long enough, they will return to where they started. If PCs get off at a stop beyond the map edges, simply tell them that they are lost. All passersby will be able to tell them where the Underground station is if the characters lose sight of it. Stations are marked with large signs having the following design: a red circle with a bar through it horizontally. On the bar is written in white, "Underground." All street urchins will have perfect knowledge of the Underground in their neighborhoods, and are 75% certain of areas outside their own.

In case characters somehow get pushed onto an Underground track, there are four rails, two of which carry 660 volts DC. Persons shorting out the live rails will be frozen to them by the current, and will take 1d20 points of damage per segment until freed. Using conducting materials to free them is not a good idea, since the person doing so will be frozen by the current just like the person he is trying to rescue. To make matters worse, a new train appears every two turns; its impact damage will be 5-50 points per person at any point between stations, and 2-20 at a station. Characters not stuck to rails by the current flow receive a save vs. petrification to avoid the oncoming train by rolling out of the way.

6. The Royal Albert Hall. A huge circular domed building of reddish stone, the Royal Albert Hall is a concert hall of great size. Small signs outside the hall read, "David Bowie Live in Concert! One Night Only! Tickets available now: £5.5, £8.5, £10." On the doors to the Hall, though, are signs reading, "Closed for repair and maintenance," and inquiries at the box office will reveal that the Hall will be closed for another two weeks. The southern doors to the Hall are open, though, and a small pickup truck is parked by them. The truck has a sign on it which reads, "R. Starkney, Contractor, 4000 Wholsen Road, Blackburn, Lancastershire," and in the truck's bed are assorted tools, tiles, paint pots, and lumber. If PCs enter the Hall, they will find Mr. Starkney hard at work repairing a number of small holes in the floor of the building. Internally, the Hall resembles any large auditorium.

7. Imperial College of Science and Technology (7A) and The Royal College of Science (7B). These two colleges are bustling with students (it being the end of the spring semester and near exam time). If PCs wander around here, there is a 75% chance for every five rounds of wandering that a student will ask them if they are looking for someone or something, or will ask if he can help them. If characters happen to observe lectures or classes, they will be able to understand the basics of nearly everything they hear being discussed, except for elementary courses in geology, physics and mathematics.

In the Archaeology department of the Royal College of Science can be found an expert on old weapons who has examined the *Mace of Cuthbert* in the Victoria and Albert Museum across the street, and plans to write a paper on its unique metallurgical properties as compared to other weapons from the same period. Professor Byron Marlowe, Ph.D. (0 level, AC 10, hp 8, STR 16, INT 17, CON 17), is a robust and hearty 65-year-old, and he knows how to use the deceptively decorative weapons that hang on his walls: a morning star, a broadsword, a halberd, and a crossbow. However, he is not a violent, or even unlikeable, man; he is quite personable and will take the time to talk about his work with anyone who expresses interest, and will go into ecstasies if he meets someone whose knowledge of medieval weapons meets or exceeds his own. He is quick-witted and strong of arm, and will not hesitate to grab one of his weapons (the morning star is his favorite; he has not worked with the broadsword enough to manage it yet) if he is threatened or attacked.

8. The Natural History Museum. This museum is filled predominantly with galleries of dinosaur bones, rocks, meteors, displays on cultural groups, English history, and the like. One gallery has as its centerpiece a massive, 30' -diameter globe of the Earth, showing the planet in great detail,

rotating on its axis. For more details, just picture the typical museum, and describe things in terms that will be moderately puzzling to characters. Remember that it is a small museum, and as such, it need not be extensive.

This museum is provided mainly as a diversion; errors in triangulation or whatever other method is used to zero in on the *Mace* can possibly indicate that this building holds the *Mace* instead of the Victoria and Albert Museum; and it does contain a display of ancient weapons, including a couple of maces. This display just happens to be located parallel to the location of the *Mace* across the street in the other museum. That is, if the mace detector is pointed at this display, it will register positively for the actual *Mace*, which is about 150' beyond it. Characters paying close attention to the mace detector will note that its brightest light is about five degrees off the line pointing directly at the maces here, although the continuous glow implies that the actual *Mace* is nearby.

9. Victoria and Albert Museum. One of London's many fine museums, the Victoria and Albert specializes in the fine and applied arts. Spread throughout its two floors and many galleries can be found everything from 20th-century watercolors to medieval illuminated manuscripts to arms and armor from many of Earth's cultures. It is in this building that the *Mace of Cuthbert* lies.

The following is a short summary of pertinent details necessary to the presentation of the museum in game play. The museum is located north of the Thames, approximately a mile and a half from Battersea Park and the urchins' home. It is open every day, and admission is free.

Free tours depart from room 25 on the first floor every hour starting at 10 a.m., providing an excellent opportunity to scout the museum and assess its defenses. These tours stop in almost every gallery for a few minutes, and the tour guides provide a running commentary on the major items on display, as well as answering (or, at least, trying to answer) any and all questions.

Security appears nonexistent during the day, but in any given room at any time there is a 50% chance that a plainclothes officer will be present. Plainclothesmen are armed with .38 revolvers and should be considered the equivalent of 4th-level fighters, with 27 hp and AC 8 due to training and clothing. Any disturbance in the presence of a plainclothesman will be immediately responded to by the officer, and all disturbances (whether or not an officer is present) will be answered by 1-4 other plainclothes officers in one round.

All items on display, unless specifically described otherwise, are found in glass cases. Breaking the glass or moving a case more than one inch (real scale) will trigger an alarm, bringing 2-12 security personnel in one round during the day, and 6-15 after closing. All will be armed with .38 revolv-

ers. At night, all major galleries also have electric-eye beams surrounding the more valuable exhibits; these may be noted during the day, since they are not hidden. In addition, all display areas have ultrasonic motion detectors scanning them. Due to their superior hearing, gnomes have a 70% chance of actually hearing the ultrasonic pulses sent out twice a second by these devices. Breaking a beam or moving too quickly in the area of a motion detector will have the same result as tampering with a display case.

Note that motion detectors can be defeated by moving slowly enough; they operate by scanning the echo pattern reflected from the area they cover and comparing it to the pattern stored from the last scan. If the two patterns vary by more than a certain percentage, the alarm is triggered. By moving slowly enough, the increments of change in position can be reduced below the detector's alarm threshold. Exactly what is slowly enough is up to the individual DM and how difficult he wishes to make this portion of the adventure.

At night, all alarms will also sound in a nearby police station, resulting in the appearance of 2-5 police cars with two officers in each (identical in stats to security plainclothesmen) in 5-8 rounds.

The museum security force consists of 40 men during the day (25 being 3rd-level fighter equivalents with 19 hit points each, and the remaining 15 conforming to the general statistics given above). At night, the museum contingent numbers 50 (35 3rd-level and 15 4th-level equivalents). Several two-man teams constantly patrol the museum after closing, armed with .38 revolvers and billy clubs and carrying a walkie-talkie, with which they communicate with the security center; every fifteen minutes, such a patrol will enter each room/area, examine it for 1 round, and then depart unless their suspicion is aroused or they are attacked. The museum is constructed generally with smooth walls and floors, so that the sounds of a scuffle or combat may carry and have a 50% chance of attracting the attention of another patrol. These will report in to the security center, then investigate. If they do not check back three rounds later, 5-10 more security guards, all of them armed, will be dispatched to the guards' last reported location.

At all times during open hours, there will be from 3-30 people present in each room or gallery, taking tours or just walking about the museum on their own. All are O-level characters with 1-3 hit points. There is a 10% chance that a professional thief (13th-level equivalent) will be present in the museum, and will notice PCs as being "out of place." He will surreptitiously follow them and attempt to find out what they are planning or doing.

Note that during open hours and for some time afterward, the museum is brightly lit. Commencing two hours after closing, lighting will be reduced to roughly the level of torchlight. Even so, there is no

limitation on radius of vision, since all lighting comes from conveniently spaced fixtures overhead or on the walls. There are few shadows inside the museum that are suitable for thieves' hiding abilities.

The following are standard descriptions for several common room types found in the museum.

*Elevators* (marked E on the maps): Each of these is a chamber roughly 7' square, with a sliding metal door. On the outside, next to the door, is found a small plate with two buttons of a horn-like material; one is marked with an arrow pointing up, the other with an arrow pointing down. Pressing the button causes it to glow. After 1-2 rounds, the glow ceases and the door slides open. The interior is wood-paneled, and to one side of the door is another plate similar to the one outside, except that the buttons are marked "1" and "2." The elevator doors will close 3 segments after they open, but unless a floor button is pressed, they will not move for several rounds, at which time they will go to the other floor to pick up 1-8 museum visitors.

*Closets* (marked C on the maps): These are irregular in shape and size, but all will contain 1-4 each of the following items: brooms, pails, mops, and buckets/bottles of cleaning supplies. There is a 50% chance that one of the following may also be found there: large cartons holding paper towels and toilet paper, a wheeled trash bin large enough to hold two human-sized creatures, or 1-6 partially full trash bags.

*Offices* (marked O on the maps): These rooms each have 1-4 desks (depending on floor space available), occasionally covered with papers. For every desk, there will be one computer terminal available. During the day, an office will have double its number of desks in people (all 0 level with 1 hp) bustling about. If a PC enters an office, the people therein will demand to know his business with them. If the PC does not answer, or answers incorrectly, he will be shown the door and told the department that he does want to see. At night, offices will have no inhabitants and will be unlit.

*Departmental offices*: Six offices are identified in the key as "departmental offices." Each one has from 6-10 desks, double the number of desks in people working there, and at least four computer terminals. They will usually be decorated in a manner appropriate to their department. Department people tend to be busier than others, but they will try to help if the PCs have a problem related to their field.

Some doors on the maps are marked X. These doors bear signs reading "Authorized Personnel Only." Museum visitors will not open these doors, although security and other staff members regularly pass through them. Anyone who is not a museum employee and is found past these doors is told by the nearest employee that they are in a closed section and are kindly asked to leave. If the PCs refuse, security guards will be called and will appear in one round to escort them to a public room.

Computer terminals will be found in almost every office. They are the standard video type, that is, having a keyboard attached by a cable to a TV-like monitor, the whole attached by another cable to a box mounted on a nearby wall. If a PC is successful in rolling on the modern artifact table to understand the terminal, he may then access any information desired. All references to the *Mace of Cuthbert* refer to it as a 12th-century mace with extraordinary resistance to rust and corrosion — and link it with two nearby swords that possess the same properties.

Note that most room descriptions following are very vague. This is because there are so many items in each room that describing them would prove prohibitively long. Outstanding items will be noted, but it is suggested that the DM either research appropriate furnishings or improvise as needed. Unless otherwise noted, though, room contents will generally have no appar-

ent value to the characters, other than their intrinsic beauty or appeal. In any case, most items will be too distinctive to be disposed of in London.

#### First floor

Note that many first floor galleries extend upward to the roof and the skylights there. Many of the second-floor areas are balconies and walkways over these rooms. The glass in the skylights is old and fragile, and will shatter with any impact.

1. Entry Hall. This area, like the rest of the museum, is floored with marble slabs. A dome soars 50' overhead. Statues of Buddha are seated in the corners of the hall, and the finely sculpted staircases to the east and west lead upward to the next floor and down to the men's and ladies' rooms. A uniformed security guard sits in the center of a circular desk just inside the main entrance to the museum.

2. Central Hall. This is the center of a

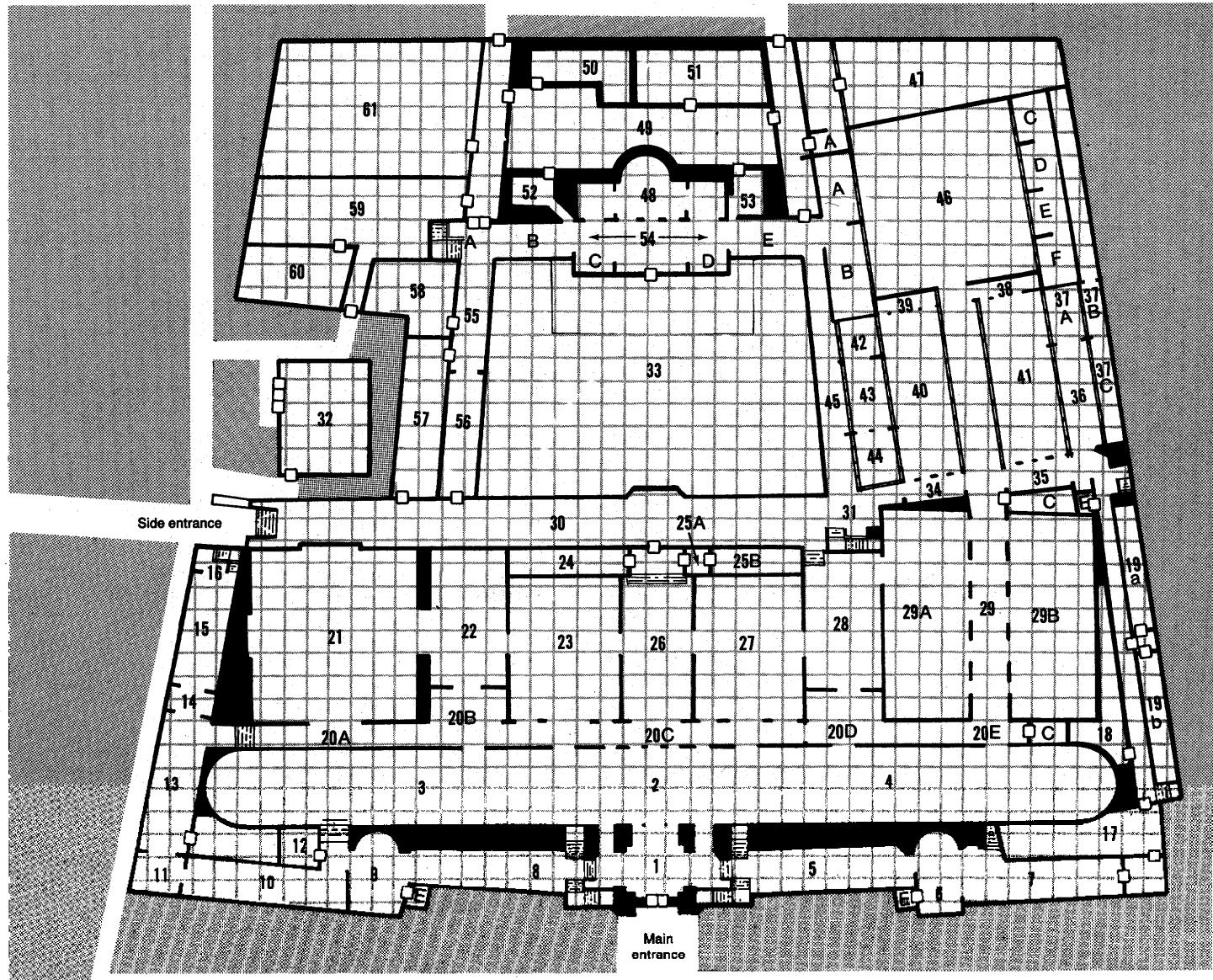
long hall extending both east and west. It arches up like a cathedral to form the roof 30' up; skylights punctuate this roof. Two walkways cross this room immediately overhead, and mezzanines can be seen to either side. Here are found more Buddhist figures.

3. West Hall. This long section is filled with an eclectic collection of items, including ornately sculpted fireplace fronts, doll houses, architectural woodwork like columns and balustrades, all finely done, and the entire front of a house (dated 1500) which looks like the latest in architecture "back home."

4. East Hall. This gallery is filled with examples of Italian and French architecture, including a whole Italian chapel from the fifteenth century. Its altarpiece has a painting of a knight (St. George) slaying a green dragon. Also, a number of sculpted busts are found here. A walkway crosses overhead 50' from the eastern end of the hall.

## Museum, first floor

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



5. Florentine sculpture, including "Christ in the Sepulchre," "Christ Giving the Keys of Heaven to St. Peter," and other large pieces.

6. In the north end of this area is a Cupid by Michelangelo, surrounded by his wax models for other sculptures. A number of paintings line the walls, along with an ornately painted shield having a very complex heraldic device indicating ten or more generations of knighthood in the family. A number of Italian medals are also displayed in this area.

7. Ivories and crystal carvings. There are 20 of each on display, and each one is worth from 200-2000 gp each, except for a finely worked ivory casket worth 3000 gp.

8 to 16. A series of galleries displaying English furniture and woodwork from A.D. 1300 to 1790. Entire rooms have been reconstructed in painstaking detail throughout this entire area, to better display the furniture pieces in their original settings.

17. Departmental office of architecture and sculpture. This office is decorated with wooden cornices and columns, and it has a number of small bas-reliefs of English and Italian origin embedded in its walls. Much of the south wall is a bookcase. Five turns of searching this bookcase will uncover a book on construction methods unknown but usable in the AD&D game world, methods so new and innovative that the book will be worth 5,000 gp to the right buyer. However, unless the character who finds this book has some knowledge of the subject matter, it is only 5% likely that he will recognize its value.

18. Storage. This room is locked with a modern cylinder lock. Inside will be found several empty boxes, two crates holding a porcelain set wrapped in straw (worth 5,000 gp if the entire set can be transported back to the campaign world), and a small chest holding what appear to be many carved wands made of ebony. While worth perhaps 300 gp, these are not wands — this is actually a set of pickup sticks crafted for an Italian duke's daughter.

19. High-security storage. The central room of this area always has two armed security guards on duty, and the doors are equipped with photo-electric beams. Room 19A is currently empty, but in 19B is a set of gold dinnerware destined for display in a month. Each piece in the set is worth from 20 to 100 gp, and the entire set of 120 pieces is worth 10,000 gp complete.

20. Corridor displays: A. Chinese and Japanese lacquerwork and furniture; B. Ivories and leatherwork; C. Chimney pieces; D. Musical instruments; E. Plaster casts (sculptures).

21. The Loan Court. Also known as the Octagon Court. There are many varied items on display in this room. The most interesting are: a collection of ancient Far Eastern pottery and bronzes; examples of English silversmiths' work (45 pieces of wrought silver jewelry — determine value as in the DMG, but none over 1,200 gp); a collection of clocks, watches, sundials, and

astrolabes from the 16th and 17th centuries (the watches and astrolabes will prove interesting to sages and magic-users, but not of great value); Greek embroideries; and a Chinese tapestry worth 4,000 gp.

22. West Court. Rugs and carpets from Europe, Japanese and Chinese furniture, including the gold throne of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (worth 200,000 gp, but impossible to move).

23. West Central Court. Chinese sculpture, Japanese bronzes (including a 12' sitting Buddha); early Mideast carpets — the Ardabil carpet, from Persia (c. 1540, worth 1,200 gp), plus Persian silks and velvets (value as indicated in the DMG, p. 27, for valuable commodities).

24. Souvenir and print shop. Guidebooks to the museum are available here for only 4sh 3p, along with other printed material on the various displays and collections, plus the usual things you find in souvenir shops. The shop is staffed by a young girl just out of the English equivalent of high school, who could easily fall for a handsome fighter-type (Diane MacKie, 0 level, AC 10, hp 2, charisma and comeliness 16 each).

25. Tours. 25A is the office of the guided tour service; every hour on the hour, a tour leaves from here. The single desk in this glass-fronted room is manned by a bored young fellow who would welcome a little excitement in his job. As it stands, he plays "Adventure" on his computer most of the time. If he sees the party involved in a fistfight or other altercation, he is 80% likely to join in just for some excitement on a random side if it appears that the party is not strictly breaking any laws, otherwise he will join the side of the security guards. Bored young man (Mark O'Dowd): 0 level, AC 10, hp 6, STR 17. 25B is the lounge for resting and off-duty tour guides. At any time, 1-4 guides may be found here.

26. Central Court. Tapestry-maps of England and other tapestries and carpets are on display here.

27. East Central Court. Several Rodin sculptures are found on the floor, while tapestries line the walls: a Flemish "Siege of Troy," a three-paneled "Triumphs of Pet-rarch," and a depiction of the Fates.

28. A large tapestry hangs here, but the main items of interest are a collection of musical instruments: lutes, dulcimers, lyres, recorders, flutes, panpipes and more, dating from about 1200 to 1750. One small lyre is of particular quality and will catch the eye of any bard who happens to glance through this room. While not magical, it is of exquisite craftsmanship and despite its age is in excellent condition. Because of its quality, it will add 5% to charm attempts by any bard who plays it.

29. Square Court. Running the length of the room overhead is a walkway which seems to have pottery stationed along its length. The room itself contains many plaster casts. Some are obviously miniatures of other works in the museum (some are studies for the sculptures in 27), but most are works in and of themselves, depicting

a number of different subjects, including many Greek gods and goddesses.

30. Ironwork gallery. Much decorative wrought-iron work is found along this hallway, including fireplace implements, hinges and bolts, cast iron firebacks and firedogs, and locksmiths' work. Any thief carefully studying the progress of locksmithing in this hallway (which extends from a period contemporary with AD&D lock technology to about 1890) will start picking all locks, modern or medieval, at two levels above his old skill level, permanently. For this to occur, one week of careful study of this exhibit is required.

31. Casts of wrought-iron work are found in the hollow of this stairwell, while books are displayed on the landing. There is nothing of any interest here.

32. The museum garage. This building houses four compact automobiles and two trucks belonging to the museum, as well as the equipment needed to maintain them. During the day, there will be one mechanic (0 level, hp 5) on duty, and there is a 50% chance per vehicle that it will be in use (i.e., gone). At night, the garage is locked and dark, and is checked by the security patrols. It is also hooked into the alarm system by several motion detectors.

33. The Quadrangle. This is the open courtyard in the center of the Museum. It is set up to be a small garden, with paths winding through the exotic foliage. There are many plants not native to England, and all are labeled with small signs at their bases or on their trunks. Should the characters search long enough (10% per round cumulative), they will discover a young yew here, suitable for making several bows. At the north end of the quadrangle, there is a patio with about twenty tables, each surrounded by chairs. This is the outdoor dining area for the restaurant at area 48.

34. Leadwork and several church bells are placed here under the mezzanine. None have any value for the PCs. Besides, the bells are heavy — the lightest weighs something close to 250 pounds, and the heaviest is in excess of one ton. To prevent damage to the floor, the bells are on stone blocks about 1 1/2' high.

35. Monumental brasses are found in this area, brassworks on a scale comparable to the church bells in area 34. On display here are brass cannon barrels and early brass handguns. Other pieces include a cast-brass battering ram head that was never used, dated c. 1280, and massive brass candlesticks over 8' tall and weighing well over a hundred pounds each.

36. A display of Sheffield plate, that is, silver work, is found here under the mezzanine. There are seventy pieces on display, all of significant quality, but none worth over 5 gp each.

37. These areas hold what appear to be hundreds of many different kinds of gold and silver coins and ingots on display. While there appears to be 7,500 gp worth of precious metals here, these are all electroplate copies of the actual coins (as anyone

bothering to read the identifying signs will discover). All of these false coins, if returned to the party's native world, can be immediately detected by any coin dealer, dwarf, or gnome who has the chance to hold one.

38. In special recessed displays, built so that only a small pane of glass is vulnerable to breakage, a number of valuable pieces of jewelry are visible. There are twelve pieces or groups of pieces on display, totaling 17,000 gp. The glass covering them is shatter-resistant, and a blunt weapon wielded with a strength of 18(45) or better is needed to break it. Note also that the displays have vibration sensors, and motion detectors scan this room continuously.

39. English silver is on display here, real silver this time: ingots and wrought structures, 55 pieces worth 1-50 sp each.

40 and 41. South Court, west and east halves. A walkway crosses this gallery, supported by pillars which effectively divide the room in half. Both halves contain essentially the same types of exhibits, namely the works of various types of metalsmiths: candlesticks, censers, incense boats, altarcrosses, cups, bowls, spoons, watches, rings and seals, all of various precious metals. In area 40 there is a book made of thin metal sheets, enameled and illuminated, which could be worth up to 15,000 gp to the right buyer. In area 41, there is also a collection of gems, 120 in all. However, only 15% have a base value of 50 gp or more, and in any case none are worth over 200 gp.

42. Chinese and Japanese enamelwork is on display in this alcove. Sample pieces include enameled metal plaques, vase and bowls, plus other utensils.

43. Some thirty pieces of pewterwork are on display here, all household items like plates and pitchers. Each piece is worth no more than 1 sp.

44. Similarly, leadwork is displayed in this area. The majority of the items on display are hand-crafted toy soldiers. About a dozen figures are of a type similar to gaming miniatures.

45. Pieces of Near East and Far East metalwork line this hallway, including a bronze mosque-lamp (an "Aladdin"-style lamp) from Cairo, tinned copper, iron and steel work including a ceremonial dagger with a bone handle, more Buddha figures, tall statues of mandarins and other Chinese authority figures, and several 5' incense burners, green with age.

46. The armor room. On display in this room are examples of armor from all over England and Europe. The central room, which rises to a skylight 30' above, is ringed with balconies and holds ten figures of knights on horseback (positions indicated on the map). The knights are in chain mail and plate mail. All examples of bardings on display are plate mail. The center display is of a knight in a full suit of plate on a rearing horse, brandishing a lance. Note that all this armor is about six inches too small for most human characters (since medieval Earth humans averaged that much smaller

than PCs), although elves could wear it if they didn't mind a little bagginess. The alcoves on the perimeter of this room are as follows: A. Later, very ornate suits of English plate and chain. B. Spanish armor. C. Portuguese armor. D. French armor. E. Swiss armor.

47. The Computer Center. The floor in this room is not the usual marble; instead, it is made up of slightly springy white tiles about 1 1/2' on a side. The floor slopes up at point A until it rises about 1', then opens to the rest of the room. A glass wall with a door in its center divides the room into two parts: to the west are a number of low tables with computer terminals on them, twelve in all, and mounds of long, wide paper with green stripes and strangely formed lettering. There will be from 4-16 people in this area at any given time during open hours and for two hours after closing. On the east side of the glass wall are a number of blue and grey metal boxes. Most are strangely constructed wheels and disks that spin behind glass or under cover; one spits out reams of the green and white paper found outside. One box has several small lights on its top, but otherwise seems to do nothing. This is the computer itself.

If a PC ventures past the glass wall, he will be thrown out as quickly as possible. However, if the PC manages to do more than look at any of these boxes, he has a percentage chance of crashing the computer equal to 100 minus his intelligence score. Crashing the computer will greatly anger the 2-8 technicians here and will result in the arrival of 2-8 security guards one round later.

48. J. B. Wineberry's — a restaurant. This area is decorated with reproductions of the more famous paintings in the museum's collection, and is dimly lit, to about the brightness of torchlight. A waiter will appear as soon as the area is entered, to escort patrons to one of the twelve tables (each seats four) inside. Or, as he will remind the PCs, one may dine outdoors in the Quadrangle on fair days. Prices are reasonable, about £5, and the menu has a selection of seven entrees. DMs are urged to take advantage of all the possibilities for humor, should PCs decide to dine here. (Culture shock is a wonderful thing.)

49. Kitchen. Long preparation tables, large ovens and stoves with boiling and bubbling pots, stainless steel shelving, gleaming utensils, pots hanging from overhead racks, and a constant murmur of activity as five waiters, two cooks and about a dozen scullery kids rush around fill this room so completely that PCs will find it difficult to get in, let alone search it, during the day. At night, it will be completely empty.

50. The restaurant's refrigerator. Frozen foods of all descriptions. Characters staying in here for more than one round will begin to take 1-6 points of cold damage per round until they leave — if they *can* leave; the refrigerator door does not open from the inside, and there is a 5% chance (20% if

the door is slammed) that the outside latch will fall into place by itself.

51. Dry goods. Flour, fresh vegetables, bottles and cans of sauces, syrups, and soups, and the like all will be found here in abundance.

52. Men's restroom.

53. Women's restroom.

54. Oriental metalwork is on display along this hall. By section there are: A. Cast iron, bronze, brass and copper pieces. B. Japanese weapons. Two katanas (long-swords) and a wakizashi (short sword) of extraordinary quality are found in this case. C. Sword-furniture (that is, accessory pieces) and other fine metalwork. D and E. Japanese and Chinese armor (Samurai armor in particular — there are three suits on display).

55. English weaponry. On display here are three longswords, a broadsword and a two-handed sword, several assorted polearms, a pair of battleaxes, two maces, and three morning stars. Crossbows and longbows hang from the walls, and a series of prints beneath the bows show the process of making arrows. A long, low table displays many styles of daggers and other short bladed weapons, along with two "trick" swords — one with a spring-loaded dagger in its hilt, the other with a well for poison.

Most of the weapons in this room are old and fragile, except for those described below. Should an attempt be made to use a weapon found in this room, roll d100 vs. the wielder's strength the first time it hits its target; 1 point of strength = 1 percentage point, exceptional strength getting 1% for every 10 points, rounding up, and 5% for every point at 19 and greater. Should the DM roll this number or lower, the weapon shatters; if the roll is high, the weapon remains intact and no further check is required for the life of the weapon.

Two of the swords are of obvious, though archaic, elven manufacture, and one of the maces shows little wear and no marks indicating that rust or corrosion were removed (as do most of the other weapons). This mace is the *Mace of Cuthbert*. Note that this area is but 50' from Museum Security's headquarters. If the glass case holding the *Mace* is smashed or moved enough to trigger the alarm, it will take less than one round for security personnel to arrive.

56. Steelwork other than weaponry. A set of dioramas depicts the process of medieval steel-making, and the many tools needed are found in the glass cases of this room. Also, ornate iron caskets, iron and steel tools, torch sconces and lamps and lanterns may be found here.

57. Metalwork departmental office. The office is decorated with several more swords (mounted on the north wall, surrounding a shield in good condition), and a number of decorative but functionally decrepit halberds. Otherwise this area is similar in contents and description to area 17.

58. Woodwork departmental office. This office is furnished with pseudo-antique desks and chairs, and has decorative wood

carvings in the corners and hanging on the walls. It is otherwise similar to the previous departmental offices.

59. Security headquarters. A cluttered, almost homey-looking room, Security Central has half a dozen desks, each with a computer terminal, a pile of papers, and a harassed officer. Along one wall is a bank of tell-tales and other indicators from the assorted alarm triggers throughout the Museum. A basic staff of ten will always be found in this room, and the remainder come and go as required by their duties. The Chief of Security, whose desk is found in the southeast corner of the room, is a rangy man of about forty (6th-level fighter, AC 9/7 with bulletproof vest, hp 49, carries two .38 revolvers). He is on duty from an hour before opening to three hours after closing.

60. Very high security storage. This safe (because that's essentially what it is) has 3' -thick stone and concrete walls, and its door has a complex combination lock that subtracts 80% from a thief's chance to crack it (assuming he has any idea how), since it is like nothing a thief will have ever encountered before. The door is always locked, and only the Chief of Security and his assistant who takes the night shift (4th-level fighter, AC 9, hp 25, armed with .38 revolver) know the combination. It is currently empty.

61. Main office of the museum. Another bustling and homey place, this room is constantly in motion during the day, as its

25-person staff carries on the daily business of running a museum. At the time the party is around, an ancient switchboard system is being removed, and a more modern intercom/phone system is being installed, so this area will be even more hectic than usual as 2-5 workers rush in and out per round, carrying mysterious equipment and tools. Each of the ten desks here has a computer terminal. While harried, the museum staff will try to be courteous and helpful to persons seeking help and information, and will try to direct those with questions that they can't answer (65% of all inquiries) to people who can.

### Second floor

(Again note that much of this level is mezzanine or balcony. Wherever such is the case, there will be a 3 1/2' railing of carved marble.)

1. East Central Staircase. Pottery from many different cultures is found on the stairs and at their top. Generally Middle Eastern in origin, the pottery is colorful and distinctive in form.

2 through 10. Textiles and clothing. Along this long set of galleries, one may find the following: Near Eastern (Persian/Arabic) ecclesiastical garments (this and all such following will be recognized as clerical robes and gowns, but of unknown type); Continental religious garb dating from A.D. 1100-1420; Turkish silks and velvets, which are worth 1 1/2 times the rate given in the *DMG* due to age and quality; English

ecclesiastical vestments; European and Oriental silks, brocades, and velvets, also worth one and a half times the going rate; stuffs from Egyptian burying grounds: embroidered hangings and other cloths, all very beautiful but worth little; European embroideries, including a Spanish rug common enough in workmanship to be worthless "back home," though very striking; Greek embroideries; embroideries from Algeria, Morocco, Palestine, Persia, Turkestan and many other cultures. While worth little if anything to the party, the wide variety of styles and culture names on the exhibits in this area should prove very intriguing.

11. The Salting Collection. A miniature museum in itself, this room contains everything from Italian Renaissance bronzes of sphinxes and an equestrian figure, to worked leather caskets, to enamelwork, to all forms of metalsmithing, including gold, silver, and steel.

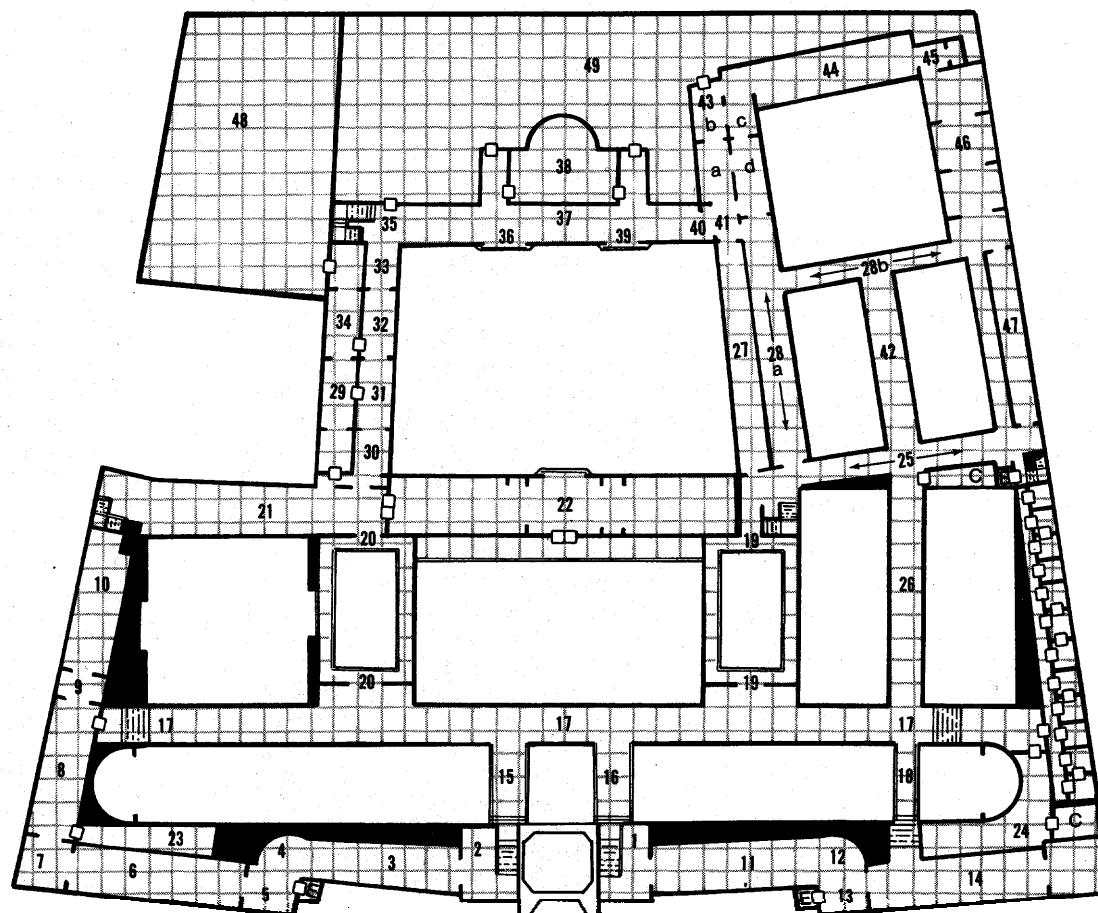
12. French Renaissance furniture. Delicate, almost spindly pieces are on exhibit here; all items of furniture are on open daises, but are protected by motion detectors.

13. Miniatures (works 3" x 3" in size and smaller). While curiosities, the paintings and etchings by Durer, Lucas Van Leyden and Rembrandt are seemingly too small to be worth anything.

14. Glass vessels from all cultures, especially Europe and Arabia. A set of chemical glassware worth 10,000 gp to a sage, magic-

# Museum, second floor

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



user or alchemist is found here.

15 and 16. Fine laces: Venetian point, Flemish, English and French point. Worth perhaps 15 gp per yard, the 40 + yards of material here are too old and delicate to survive any but the most delicate handling.

17. Costumes and clothing from the Elizabethan age to the Victorian. Gloves, shoes, lace, needlepoint, whole outfits are displayed on a rotating schedule in the glass cases found along the entire length of the mezzanine in this area.

18. An exhibit of fans, valueless to PCs.

19. The balcony of the East Court. A reproduction of the Bayeux Tapestry (worth no more than 400 gp), and linen damasks (see *DMG*, p. 27, for value).

20. Balcony of the West Court. A technical exhibit illustrating the printing and bookbinding process. If the campaign world does not have manufactured books, this exhibit will prove incomprehensible except to those characters with a 16 or higher intelligence.

21. Illuminated manuscripts. The St. Denis and Lesnes Missals, an Italian manuscript of Pliny's *Natural History* (worth 5,000 gp for its scientific value alone), volumes illustrating printing, decoration and illustration of books, and miniature and liturgical books.

22. The library. 160,000 volumes (non-circulating) on fine and applied art. Assuming a desired subject comes under these headings, there is a 10% per turn (cumulative) chance of locating 1-6 relevant volumes, should one be searching. Entrance to the library is by application at the museum's main office; whimsical or irrelevant requests will be turned down.

23. Textiles departmental office. Glass cases on all walls hold examples of clothwork from civilizations ranging from ancient Egypt to modern Europe.

24. Stained glass and ceramics departmental office. Decorating this office are stained-glass panels hanging upon the walls and illuminated from behind. The passage east of area 17, down the stairs, is a short entry hall with glass-encased examples of pottery and terracotta work through the ages.

25. This gallery contains a collection of military medals, all of which are very eye-catching and splendid, but are worth very little, as opposed to the mother-of-pearl carvings which share the space: twenty pieces with values of 2-40 gp each due to their workmanship.

26. Gallery across the Square Court. Exhibited here are examples of modern English and Continental pottery work.

27. Manuscripts, including originals from Dickens, are in sealed display cases here, along with a number of very old books. Among the works here are three notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, which would be priceless (well, worth at least 50,000 gp) to any number of sages in the campaign world. The notebooks are written in Leonardo's characteristic backwards script, in medieval Italian and Latin, and

are incomprehensible short of the use of a spell. Thieves who try to read these books will get very bad headaches and nothing else.

28. Two galleries of the graphic arts. These areas contain paintings, drawings, and etchings in abundance; Rembrandt etchings, oils by 19th century French masters, 20th century watercolors, oils by modern artists, even a fresco. A veritable bonanza of color and light.

29. Engraving, illustration, design, and painting departmental office. Prints of famous works, engravings, and a few actual works in oils hang on the walls here.

30 through 32. Dutch and Flemish glass paintings are on display in these connected rooms, glass paintings being works executed with great delicacy and color on mirrors, glass implements, and even simple plate glass.

33. Art of the Theatre. Drawings and designs of many of the great English theatres since the Elizabethan period. Also prints, sketches, and engravings of scenes from performances.

34. Students' room. This room is open during regular hours, and is for the viewing of items from the Engraving and Illustrations department which are not on display (indeed, most of the collection is stored due to lack of exhibit space). Access is through the departmental office, and is not difficult to obtain.

35. Candelabra in the form of nymphs and fauns, clocks, and snuff-boxes from 17th and 18th century France.

36. China: Sevres, Chelsea and Meissen porcelain in sealed glass cases overlooking the quadrangle. The individual pieces are so fine they that they are worth 1 gp each.

37. A French armoire from the 17th Century stands here.

38. Lecture hall. A raised dais in the semicircular north end of this room holds a podium facing about a hundred seats. A microphone on a gooseneck support tops the podium. Switches found underneath the podium raise/lower a movie screen behind the speaker and turn the public address system on and off. Two knobs brighten/dim the lights in the room and raise/lower the loudspeaker volume.

39. A finely decorated washstand (commode), along with a dressing table (labeled a "secretaire-toilette") originally belonging to Marie Antoinette.

40. Another selection of oil paintings and miniatures.

41. Three theatre models stand in glass cases at this spot. The models are of Shakespeare's Globe and two more modern theatres. All three are of cutaway construction, showing the various levels and rooms in the structures.

42. Stained glass from France, Germany, Italy and other countries.

43. These galleries hold the museum's collection of 18th and 19th century watercolors. Of particular interest are the works of Turner, including his scenes of the burning of the houses of Parliament, done on the

spot as the buildings were gutted. Ash and smoke from the conflagration are embedded in the works.

44. This gallery is guarded by a standard security guard at either end. It contains a set of preparatory drawings by Raphael of designs for tapestries now in the Vatican. Unless one of the player characters has an eye for art, these fading sketches will prove uninteresting.

45. Two or three more sketches by Raphael, plus a number of watercolor works occupy this small room.

46. Gallery of oils. This is the major collection of oil paintings in the museum, including works by Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, and the Old Masters, as well as preliminary sketches and studies for some.

47. Carved and sculpted wood and wooden furniture are exhibited in this area.

48. Library of illustrations and etchings. The majority of the collection of these works is kept in storage here, due to space limits on the display floor. A librarian (0 level, AC 10, hp 1) is always on duty during open hours, assisted by 1-3 college art students on work study grants (also 0 level, AC 10, hp 1). The librarian is patient to the point of fault, helping to the best of his ability even someone who just wants to browse.

49. Roof. All doors to the roof are locked from the outside, although they open easily from the inside to allow fire escape routes. However, opening these doors sets off fire alarms in their general vicinity, attracting attention to whoever tries to go through them. The roof itself is flat and uninteresting, with only three ventilation ducts emerging from it. The ducts are too small to allow even a halfling or gnome to crawl down them.

## CLOSING

Once the *Mace* has been retrieved, what then? Obviously, it must be returned to the clerics of the Saint, and to do that, the party must go through the *gate* once again. This return will happen sooner or later for every party, due to either the party's sense of obligation or the weakening effect described at the beginning of this module.

The decision may be an easy one to make. But how easily will it be for that decision to be carried out? That's up to you, the DM. If the party has behaved itself and generally kept out of sight, then there should be no trouble as they head back to Battersea Park — that is, unless they happen to meet up with the bobbie whom they kept from carting off Charlotte. If the party has been a little rowdy, then the entire police force might be looking for them.

It is my recommendation that the DM not allow the party to leave without a fight. No matter how the party has conducted itself in London, at one time or another it must have done something to annoy someone — it's inevitable. Have some great final battle between PCs and their various opponents occur in Battersea Park as the characters fight their way back to the *gate*. Use this as the opportunity to bring to a head all

the conflicts that have established themselves during the course of this adventure. Exactly what conflicts there are will vary wildly from campaign to campaign, and there is no way to account for all the possibilities a sufficient number of imaginative players can develop over the course of playing this module, so this must needs be but a brief outline of them.

However it happens, the opposition must be strong enough to keep PCs from merely brushing it aside and continuing on. If, for example, they encounter the police officer who had been arresting Charlotte, this time he will radio for backup aid and will fire on the party to keep them from escaping. Before he can be stomped by one of the fighters, five or so police cars roar in, and the battle is begun. Perhaps a street gang whose leader was trashed by the party when he was with only a few of his men has been spying on them, waiting for the right opportunity to attack with full force in the park. Maybe a terrorist group is looking to gain the party's mysterious power. It may even be an attack of conscience on the part of a paladin, for helping in the theft of an object (the *Mace*) from its rightful owners (the museum), and he's decided to return it until it can be obtained lawfully.

Whatever conflict arises, the single most important guideline to remember is that it is there to climax the adventure, not to keep it from successfully ending. If the PCs have managed to get the *Mace* from the museum, they have every right to take it back home with them. Don't make the last battle in London a deathtrap, but make it challenging nonetheless. Whatever it is, it must prove to be difficult, but not impossible, to overcome.

Returning to Gate Island may also prove a problem. It is possible that buccaneers, pirates, sahuagin, or other unfriendlies have taken over any ships the characters left behind. Other demons could have arrived, or the ship's crew could have given up waiting and sailed away.

Additional adventures may be set up using the *gate* to London, though the Dungeon Master may wish to close the *gate* down at a future date to prevent excessive transplanar contamination of his campaign (unless this contamination can somehow be controlled).

#### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following are descriptions of the three most important non-player characters that the party will meet in London: the street urchins.

##### **Charlotte**

Human child; 3rd-level thief  
Height: 4' Weight: 70 lbs.  
Hair: blonde Eyes: green  
AC 6 15 hp  
Alignment: Chaotic good  
Weapons: Slingshot, 20 stones  
Strength: 6 (-1 "to hit")  
Intelligence: 16  
Wisdom: 10

Dexterity: 18 (+ 3 with missiles)

Constitution: 15

Charisma: 16

Charlotte is a twelve-year-old girl who has been living in the streets for most of her life. She is loud, abrasive, and often insulting, but she is loyal to friends and those who do her a good turn. She moves quickly and thinks even faster, and seems to possess an unnerving cunning. She is sometimes careless, though, when she thinks that no one is around. Her one fear is rats — she was once bitten by a rat and was in mortal fear of her life until the wound healed.

Despite her guttersnipe appearance, Charlotte is a voracious reader, often stealing books from merchants along the Battersea marketplace. Hidden in a closet on an upper floor of the house she shares with Nicky and Rocco is her library: a rotting cardboard carton holding dozens of books, many of which are modern fantasy novels (from which she gets some idea of who and what the party is).

##### **Nicky**

Human child; 4th-level thief  
Height: 4' 1" Weight: 80 lbs.  
Hair: brown Eyes: blue  
AC 7 18 hp  
Alignment: Neutral good  
Weapons: Slingshot, 12 stones, pocketknife  
Strength: 9  
Intelligence: 14  
Wisdom: 11  
Dexterity: 17 (+ 2 with missiles)  
Constitution: 11  
Charisma: 14

Twelve-year-old Nicky is the undeclared leader of these three. His quiet manner and tendency towards silence belie the influence he has over his friends, but he by no means controls them; most of the time he makes suggestions that they may follow if they like

He does not venture often into the marketplace, only as he and the others need to for food and other goods. He is good with his hands and is the one who made the Bunham building habitable, tapping into power lines for heat and light.

On the palms of both of Nicky's hands there may be seen terrible burn scars. He will refuse to discuss these if asked about them, and may become violent if the matter is pressed. Charlotte and Rocco know a little about them, but will not talk, either.

Nicky has a cache of maps and other papers which he occasionally peruses.

##### **Rocco**

Human child; 3rd-level thief  
Height: 4' 4" Weight: 75 lbs.  
Hair: black Eyes: dark brown  
AC 8 12 hp  
Alignment: Chaotic neutral  
Weapons: Slingshot, 20 stones  
Strength: 8  
Intelligence: 12  
Wisdom: 9  
Dexterity: 16 (+ 1 with missiles)  
Constitution: 11  
Charisma: 12

Rocco is a black child of about eleven, and Nicky's best friend. They have lived in the streets as a team for about two years and together found the building in which the three live. Rocco is very active and can almost never be found in the house, except when he is bringing back the fruits of his latest excursion into the marketplace.

Rocco talks softly but constantly, and has a lisp which is worsened by his protruding front teeth. He is excitable and active, and often takes risks to see what he can get away with, although he will never knowingly put his life in direct danger. He and Charlotte occasionally team up to steal food from barrows with a distraction/attack technique that they have developed.

#### THE MACE OF CUTHBERT

The *Mace of Saint Cuthbert*, like all of the artifacts and relics in the AD&D game system, is a customizable magic item with powers and side effects chosen by the individual DM. In the course of running the original incarnation of this adventure, I found that the following version of the *Mace* best fit the milieus of both the game world and the modern world that held it hidden for so long.

The *Mace of Cuthbert* is a lawful good relic, being a mace that is +5 to hit and damage, with the disruption effects of a *mace of disruption*. Only a lawful good cleric with a strength of 18 can use the additional powers inherent in the *Mace*.

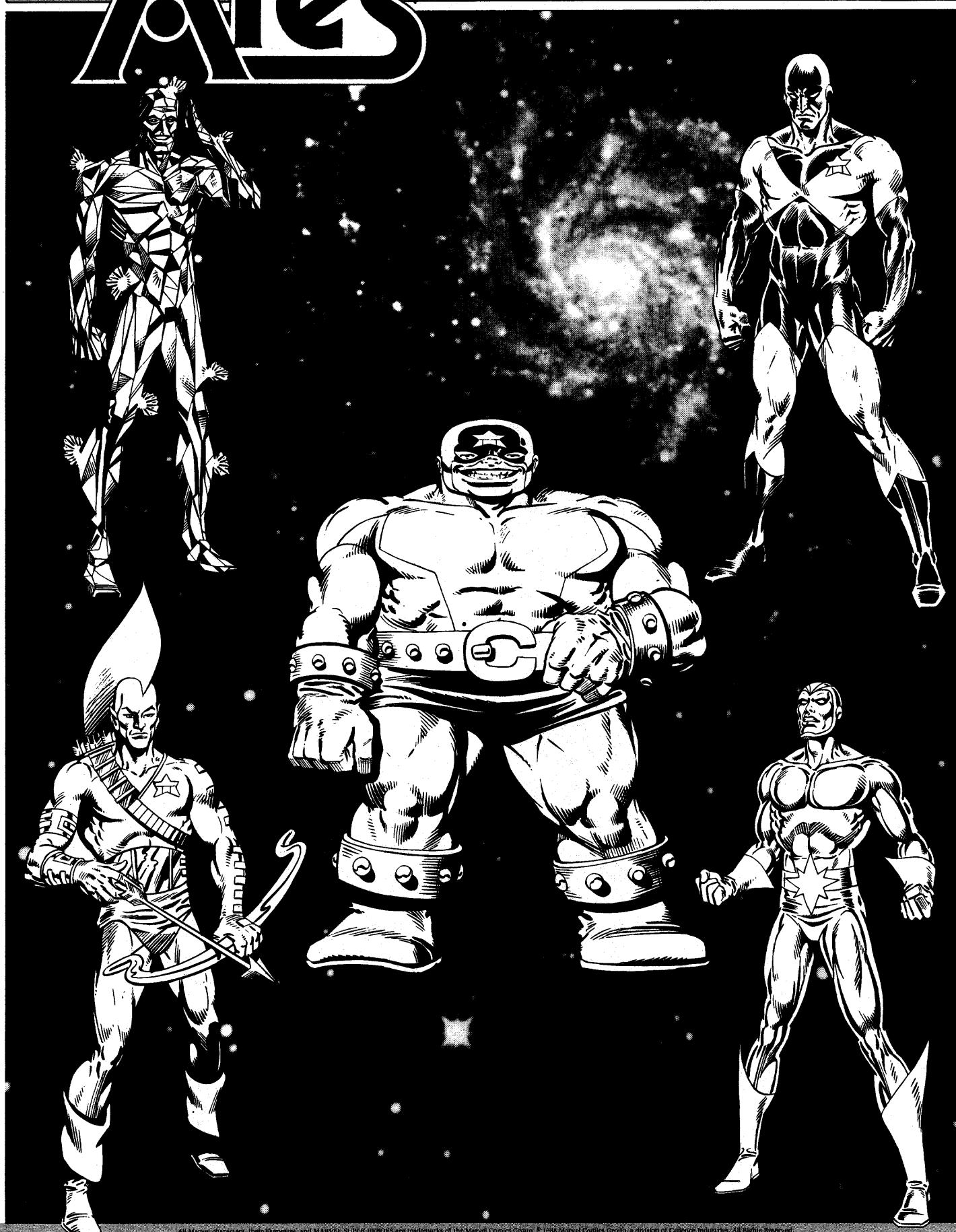
The *Mace* has three minor benevolent powers. It detects evil continuously when held, casts *light*, as the cleric spell, seven times a week, and renders the possessor of the *Mace* immune to all forms of magical *fear* when kept on one's person. The *Mace* has two major benevolent powers, allowing the user to *heal*, once per day, by touching the *Mace* to the injured person, and the possessor can cause *fear* with his gaze, at will. However, if the user is not lawful good in alignment, he will immediately change alignment to lawful good upon touching the *Mace*. This change cannot be reversed by any means. Few people have handled the *Mace* over the years in the London museum, but those who did later recalled that they changed to some degree in personality afterwards. This effect has never been recorded, of course, as it was not really considered "scientific," and no one connected their life change with touching the *Mace*.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to thank the following people for their help in creating and playtesting this adventure: the members of the Simulation Games Union at Princeton University and others from my campaign, namely Iain Bason, Adam Frankl, Sean Fitts, Randy Peters, Chris Cohen, Marian Pugh, Roger Hain, and all the folks I can remember clearly but whose names I've forgotten; and, John Carr, John Gold, and Lyn Tumlin, who role-played slightly different versions of Rocco, Nicky, and Charlotte as a favor to me.

# Ares™

SCIENCE-FICTION  
GAMING SECTION



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### ON THE COVER

The Guardians of the Galaxy make their appearance in this issue of the ARES Section. For more information on this futuristic group, see the article on p. 80. Art by the Marvel Bullpen.

Welcome to the Costumed Crusaders issue of the ARESTM Section! Because of the flood of mail in favor of more superhero articles, we present an equal flood of material in return. We'll try it again if the readers like it.

A few random notes. Yes, Frog-Man's™ Endurance was raised from Typical (in the Campaign Book) to Excellent (DRAGON® issue "96), but Jeff did this out of pity for the character. Gamers may adopt either score, depending on their Pity Level.

Readers of recent issues of the *Fantastic Four*® comic discovered that She-Hulk™ has gotten stronger (and may be getting stronger still). Raise her Strength to Monstrous (she can lift 75 tons now) in descriptions of her in the modules.

The Abomination™ is appearing with Titania™, the Hulk™, and Hercules™ in the super-module "Rampage!" See issue #25 of POLYHEDRUNTM Newszine, coming soon.

All True Believers in the MARVEL SUPER HEROESTM game should get on the stick and send in a list of things they want to see in the Advanced MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, which may be released next year. Jeff Grubb is looking for all the mail he can get on the subject.

As for the rest of you supergamers, here are some thoughts. We've gotten a few requests for listings of original heroes and villains from game campaigns for the CHAMPIONSTM and VILLAINS & VIGILANTESTM games (*a la* the Marvel®-Phile, though trademarked heroes from Marvel Comics or elsewhere cannot be used), and we're considering this as an irregular feature.

If you'd like to see this series, let us know. If there's something else you'd like to see, let us know that, too. We really do read the mail from our readers. Send us a postcard or letter and speak out! Write to: ARES Department, DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

'Nuff said.

### ARESTM Section 100 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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# Creative Conjuring

*A variant magic system for the  
MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game*

by Eric Walker

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game is a fast-paced, action-filled adventure game in which the players can do anything they want. However, like all games, it has a few bugs, particularly in the character generation system. The Campaign Book (p. 45) notes that magical training is not available as a normal talent, meaning that players cannot use Doctor Strange™ or create characters with magical powers. As the game stands now, magic is too powerful; characters can do anything with it. A sorcerer with a Psyche of Good (the minimum required for magical training) can do everything that a sorcerer with a Class 1000 Psyche could do, albeit within a very limited range. This article will attempt to solve these problems by categorizing the Marvel Universe™ magic system and limiting its powers, so that even Doctor Strange is not all-powerful. This system is based on the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® magic system, and Judges may modify it as they please.

The Campaign Book states that all magic comes from three sources: Personal Energy, Universal Energy, and Dimensional Energy. A brief description of types of spells is given on pp. 10-11, and the rest of the section describes the casting of magical spells. Actually, the three spell sources can be divided into subgroups as given on the following table.

Personal Energies	Universal Energies	Dimensional Energies
Extended senses	Alterations	Conjurations
Illusions	Divinations	Creations
Mental powers	Evocations	Necromantics

These nine categories contain all types of magics, including raising mystical force fields, dimensional travel, and turning people into frogs. Most spell effects that a Marvel Super Hero mage would desire to cast are duplicated in the AD&D *Players Handbook* and easily classified by the above system.

A spell caster can choose a certain number of magical powers from these categories, depending upon his Psyche. For every rank of a sorcerer's Psyche above Typical, he gets to choose one magical power from the table. Thus a sorcerer with a Psyche of Good would have only one power (such as Alterations), while a magician with Class 1000 Psyche would have all nine powers. Furthermore, a wizard with Good Psyche could only choose his power from the three powers under Personal Energy, and cannot use Universal or Dimensional Energies. A sorcerer with Excellent Psyche (able to use two powers) can use Personal and Universal Energies, but not Dimensional ones. The use of Dimensional Energies requires a Psyche of Remarkable or better.

This simple system limits a magic-using character but still allows him great variety in the types of spells that he can use. All nine of the magical powers are described below.

The only way for a sorcerer to gain more magical powers is to either have his Psyche raised magically or to augment his magical powers through the use of magical items. These are enchanted objects under a sorcerer's control that allow him to practice magic outside of his normal range of spells. Magic items such as crystal balls, talismans, and wands can either be taken from enemy sorcerers (a difficult deed), or they can be enchanted by the sor-



cerer himself. To make a magical item, the sorcerer must follow the steps in Chapter 2 of the Campaign Book, in the section "Building Things" (under the category of special devices). Instead of a Reason FEAT roll, he must make a Psyche FEAT roll.

To create a magical item, though, the sorcerer must have something connected with the power he wants to enchant into the item. If he wants an item that increases Strength, he must have some part of a creature of a strength equal to the level desired, such as the ear of a bull (or even a lock of the hair of Thor™). A device to allow travel through the dimensions would likely require something from another dimension. This can lead to interesting scenarios as the character and his allies venture into another dimension in search of the required item.

## Personal energies

**Extended senses** — This is the ability of a wizard to heighten or lessen his own ability scores or powers, or those of a willing subject. It also includes the ability to see into other dimensions and to project his soul into the Astral Dimension. There are limits as to how high or low ability scores or powers can be adjusted. A sorcerer with a Psyche of Good to Remarkable can change ability

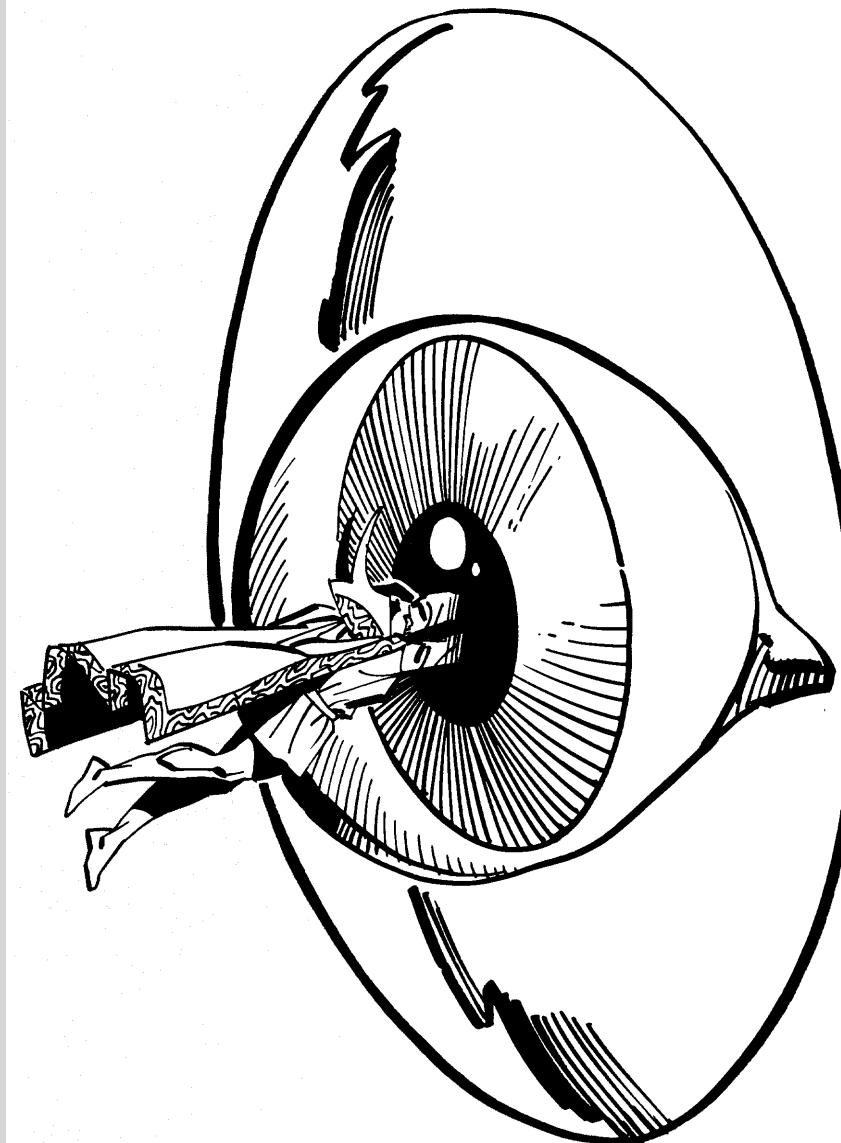
scores up to 2 ranks above or below normal; a sorcerer with Incredible to Monstrous Psyche can affect scores for up to 3 ranks; a Psyche of Unearthly and Shift X allows him to affect scores by 4 ranks, and a Class 1000 Psyche allows him to alter the scores by 5 ranks. Unlike all other spells, the effects of raising or lowering ability ranks puts such a drain on the spell caster that abilities are only affected for one day at most, and the sorcerer automatically loses 10 Health points when the spell wears off. This does not happen when the sorcerer augments his normal senses, such as sight or touch; a normal Psyche FEAT roll must be made as usual.

**Illusions** — This is not the same as the Image Generation power (under Mental Powers in the Campaign Book). The illusions that can be created are extremely varied, and include illusionary creatures and things, invisibility, and even the illusory healing of damage. If the latter illusion takes effect (meaning the affected being thinks the illusion is real), the being will be "healed" of a number of Health points equal to the caster's Psyche. Actually, no damage has been healed, and the Judge will have to keep a running total of the being's Health points; when they reach zero, the being is affected normally. Only then does he learn that the "healing" was an illusion.

**Mental powers** — This magical power can be treated the same as the Mental Powers super power (p. 42 in the Campaign Book), except that the Image Generation power will not work. A wizard having this power can use telepathy, launch a mental blast, generate a force field, and so forth. If the spell cast is permanent, the caster does **not** gain mental powers as a super power. Because it is a magical power, this power can be detected and dispelled normally. (Dispelling magic is detailed under Evocation.)

### Universal energies

**Alteration** — This is a sorcerer's ability to physically change things. With this power, a boulder can be changed into a statue, weather can be summoned and controlled, people can be changed into animals (and vice versa), and so on. Anything affected by this spell will radiate magic for the spell's duration; this is a tell-tale mark of a sorcerer's work. Note that if the spell caster has never seen a particular thing (for



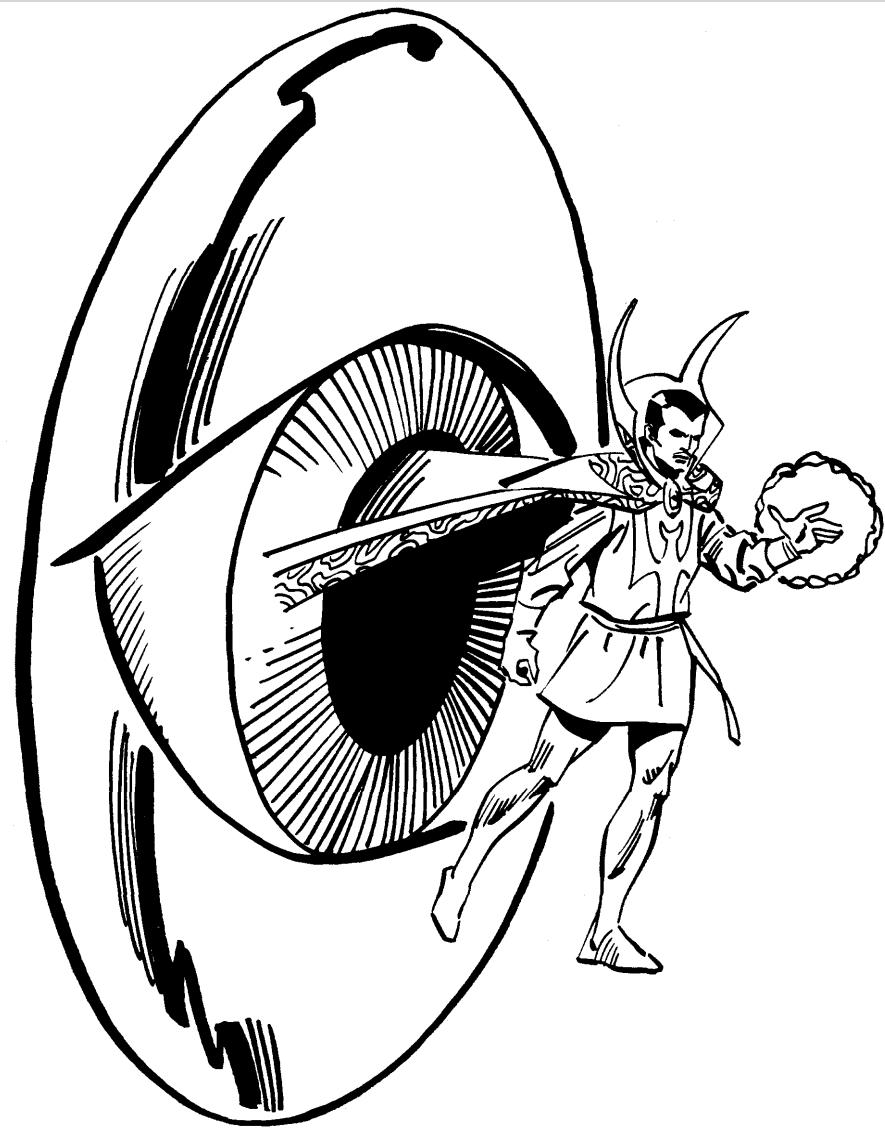
example, a Skrull™), he cannot turn any person or object into that thing.

**Divination** — This is the ability to uncover information. With this power, the sorcerer can detect sources of magic (such as other sorcerers), locate physical objects (such as a key or hidden weapon), or contact other beings (such as the rulers of other dimensions) and seek advice from them. If he attempts to do this, he must make a Personality FEAT roll. White means that the being is angered by the sorcerer's interference, and he might send one of his minions to attack the sorcerer. A green result means that no information is received ("Sorry, all lines are busy now. . ."). Yellow means that the sorcerer receives a vague message or vision that must be deciphered. Red means that the sorcerer receives exactly the information he wanted to get.

**Evocation** — This is the sorcerer's ability to harness magical energy and channel it in certain ways. This power

governs the casting of magical bolts of power, the raising of mystical shields, the power to reflect a spell completely (requiring both a red Psyche FEAT roll and the player's prior declaration that this is being attempted), or the casting of a special spell called **dispel magic**.

**Dispel magic** allows a sorcerer to completely erase or neutralize a magical effect. To accomplish this, the caster must make a Psyche FEAT roll as normal, but if his Psyche is less than the Psyche of the wizard who cast the spell that he is trying to negate, he must make a red FEAT roll to successfully dispel the magic. If his Psyche is equal to the opposing spell caster, he needs a yellow FEAT to succeed; if his Psyche is greater, a green FEAT will successfully dispel the magic. If the FEAT fails, nothing happens, and the sorcerer will not have another chance to dispel the magical effect. Note that he may automatically dispel his own magic, whether he has the power of Evocation or not.



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### Dimensional energies

**Conjuration** — This is the power to summon creatures or things from other dimensions. (Teleportation is a power found under Evocation.) With conjuration, the sorcerer can steal a piece of rock from the Negative Zone (though this is extremely dangerous), or he could summon one of the creatures from the mystic dimensions — i.e., demons. Demons are very powerful monsters that most characters should avoid, as they have certain magical abilities of their own. Unless the sorcerer has some way to control the demon he summons, there is nothing to stop it from attacking as soon as it appears. However, demons are repelled by the holy symbols of various religions, and a pentagram will serve to successfully "contain" a demon: the creature cannot cross the

boundaries of the star, nor can it cast spells across the barrier. A typical incantation to summon a demon might be versed as follows:

*"Hear me, Dormammu™ the Dark!  
A boon I dare to ask of thee:  
I call upon the Black Hellspawn —  
Awake! And harken unto me."*

Note that the power of Conjuration can be reversed, so as to banish a being from this dimension to a dimension of the sorcerer's choice.

**Creation** — This is simply the creation of things. With this power, the sorcerer can create a physical object out of thin air; its dimensions are the size of one area square per rank of the spell caster's Psyche above Excellent. Thus, a sorcerer with Remarkable Psyche could create an object of one-area size, such as a small wall, while a wizard of Class 1000 can create a seven-area object. The object can only

be roughly shaped; for fine detail, the Universal power of Alteration will have to be used by the sorcerer.

"Rough shape" means the object can be given no more than a humanoid form or the general outline of an automobile, for instance.

**Necromancy** — This is the most dangerous of all magical powers, as it involves intrusions into the domain of the being known as Death. This is the sorcerer's ability to bring the dead back to life. *Only a red FEAT* will bring the dead back to life, and, whether the caster succeeds or not, Death will become aware of the spell caster's existence. Death may ask a service of the wizard in exchange for the dead soul, or he may just shorten the sorcerer's life span by an appropriate amount. The Judge has complete authority when dealing with the sorcerer on this matter; if he thinks that the dead being should not be brought back to life, he can rule that Death does not want this soul to return to the land of the living, thus wasting the spell (and getting the sorcerer into terrible trouble).

Other forms of Necromancy that are much less dangerous include the healing of damage (equal to the spell caster's Psyche), the ability to fake death (stop heartbeat and brain patterns, etc., but still live), and to steal the soul of another being and place it in a container (called *magic jarring* — a variation of this spell was used on Ghost Rider™ once). The chance for the spell caster to steal a soul is the same as the sorcerer's chance to *dispel magic* based on the victim's Psyche. Note that the stealing of souls is an extremely evil act, and it is sure to affect the Popularity of the sorcerer.

Doctor Strange's personal abilities are given in the Campaign Book, on pp. 4-7. Under this revised system, Doctor Strange's magical abilities are not as ultimately powerful as they were under the original MARVEL SUPER HEROES system. Nonetheless, this system should give wizards in the game a fighting chance, and it will still keep a sorcerer from upsetting the all-important game balance. It should also be said that though this system limits the powers of wizards, magic-users should be very rare (at best) in the Marvel Universe. I would suggest that there should be only one wizard in every group of player characters. Otherwise, why would the game need beings like the X-Men™?

# CHAMPIONS™ Plus!

*New powers for CHAMPIONS™ heroes*

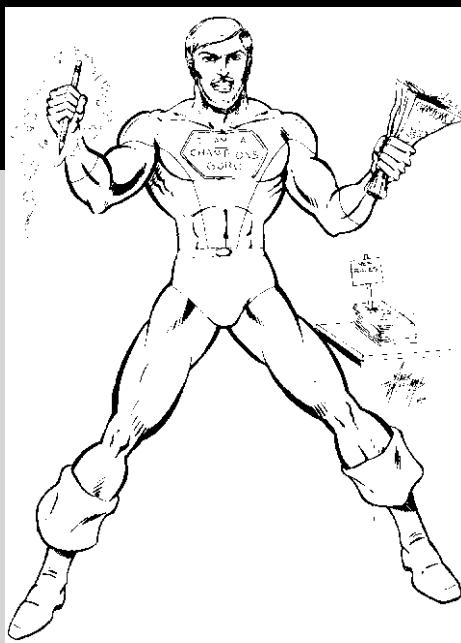
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In the CHAMPIONS™ game, players role-play superhero characters of their own design. Rather than consulting experience tables or character classes, a player creates characters using generic powers listed in the rules and defines his own special effects. It doesn't matter whether you call your Energy Blast a plasma laser or a mystic hammer of force; it's the number of dice that the character buys for the Energy Blast that sets the cost of the power.

Power advantages can be bought to allow a wider use of the various CHAMPIONS powers. In addition, a power can be bought with limitations which reduce both the price and effect of the power. Finally, to help pay for the character's powers, players may purchase disadvantages for their characters which give a base experience bonus to the characters taking them.

The CHAMPIONS game has a rather impressive list of rules with which to create a character. By defining your own special effects, anything from magic to super-technology and from mutants to aliens can be defined with equal ease. However, there are still a few effects that can't be simulated easily.

The following rule additions are optional. Because of widely differing styles of play, some rules may be perfectly reasonable in one campaign but not in another. Few of these powers are completely new; most could be simulated using the current rules, but it is nice to be able to consult a table rather than make up your own on the fly.



If an entry says nothing about END (Endurance) cost, then the power costs a character's END to run. Remember to include the END cost associated with any normal END-increasing power advantages which have been bought on the power. Skills don't cost END.

## New skills

**Bouncing:**      5 for INT roll /  
                        + 1 for 2

This is the skill of finding structures in the inner city against which a character may bounce. Scenery such as flagpoles and telephone wires can be found with a successful use of this skill. An Acrobatics roll is still necessary to bounce against the item or to keep from falling from it. If the Acrobatics roll is made, the character may leap at five times the normal distance allowed for the character's strength; characters with Superleap add this extra distance to the end of their normal leaping distance. Bouncing

is a favorite skill among street heroes.

**Combat Luck**      15 points per 1d6  
Combat Luck is just like normal Luck, except that it is three times as expensive and allows for three die rolls instead of one. Unlike Luck, Combat Luck works even when a character is winning in combat or in situations where the character doesn't need it. Combat Luck is usually a manifestation of some other super-power the character possesses; characters are usually not just "super lucky." An example of Combat Luck is a character blessed by some mystical power or who has a form of universal awareness of his surroundings.

**Extra Life**      4 each  
For every 4 permanent experience points, a character may buy an Extra Life. An Extra Life is a one-use 3d6 Luck roll that's assumed to come out as all sixes. Once used, an Extra Life disappears. (The experience that bought it disappears, too.) Extra Lives are a form of superhero insurance. They allow characters hit with a mortal blow to somehow escape death, but they must be bought before they are needed. Extra Lives may be used in any other situation the player wants; the expense is presumed to prevent totally outlandish use of them. Extra Lives cannot save the life of a character other than the one who bought them.

Example: Metalfist, an android martial artist, is trying to get out of a death trap in which a supercriminal has put him. Unfortunately, while leaping from one electrified pillar to another, the player rolls an 18 on Acrobatics and Metalfist

does a one-and-a-half gainer into a vat of acid below. Luckily, the player bought an Extra Life some time ago and expends this power now. Metalfist finds that the acid in the vat reacts strangely with his synthetic skin. The mixture explodes, knocking Metalfist unconscious but also knocking him completely out of the vat. Though damaged, he is still alive.

### New powers

#### **Domination 2d6 for 15**

This EGO-based attack is a combination of Telepathy and Mind Control. It allows the character to impose his consciousness over a victim and take control of the character's body. The dice are tallied and applied against the target's EGO as noted below. Each point of the target's EGO defense reduces the total before it is compared on the chart.

#### **EGO**

##### **mult. Domination effect**

- 1x No effect
- 2x The wielder can control the target's normal movements and use the senses they share in common. The wielder must stand motionless, but the target may perform half-normal move.
- 3x As above, but the wielder can control the target's powers (including speech) that the two have in common. The wielder must divide a full move between himself and the target (only one may attack, however).
- 4x As above, but the wielder can control all of the target's powers. Both wielder and target may make a full move, but only one may attack.

When one character Dominates another, all skills that the victim possesses are lost for as long as the Domination lasts. The speed of the victim becomes that of the attacker. A conscious victim may fight Domination by pushing EGO defense; if the Domination dice total is ever lowered by the EGO defense to a lower power effect multiple, the power effect remains lowered. Domination costs END to maintain each phase.

#### **Enrage 5 per 1d6**

This EGO-based power is a specialized form of Mind Control combined with Mental Illusions. It takes advantage of the violent tendencies that some characters have. When an EGO attack is successful, the wielder rolls the number of

dice of Enrage and compares the total to the EGO of the target on the following table.

#### **EGO**

##### **mult. Enrage effect**

- 1x Roll an EGO roll; upon failure, target rolls the most commonly occurring Berserk he has (no effect if the target has no Berserks)
- 2x Roll the target's most common Berserk (no effect if the target has no Berserks)
- 3x Roll an EGO roll; upon failure, target goes Berserk with any Berserk disadvantages
- 4x Target goes Berserk

The character stays Berserk as long as END is paid. If the wielder wishes to direct whom the Berserk character attacks, the results are shifted down one level on the preceding table. If the wielder is attacking a target who is particularly easy to anger (such as one with Arrogance or Psychological Hatreds), the results are shifted one up. When the attacker stops paying END, the target stops being Berserk if he has no Berserk disadvantages; otherwise, he immediately tries to make his normal recovery roll. Enrage is not a nice power, and no one but villains will carry it.

#### **Power Healing 1d6 for 15**

This power heals injured characters; each point rolled on the dice corresponds to one power or characteristic point which is healed. The specific power or characteristic that Power Healing works on must be decided when the healing is bought. Several powers can be specified, but this means that they divide the points between them in a fixed ratio, and any points used to heal undamaged powers or characteristics are lost. (Power Healing cannot boost a power or characteristic beyond its original value.)

Power Healing has no range. It can be used on other characters, in which case it is considered an offensive action, and it takes only one-half move to execute. Power Healing may change the nature of a campaign if abused, so referees are warned to carefully examine this power before allowing it into the game. END Healing cannot be put into a multipower.

Example: Empath has 4d6 Healing which works for BODY and STUN at an even ratio of hero points. When Slicer hits Empath with a killing attack, she takes 5 BODY and 5 STUN. Empath gets away and decides to heal herself. She rolls a 13, of which 6 hero points go to BODY and 7 go to STUN. Since BODY costs 2 hero points to buy, Empath

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regains 3 BODY and all 5 STUN.

There are a few special disadvantages for Healing. Works Only On Self gives  $\times 1/4$  points, and Applies Only Once to a Wound gives  $\times 1/2$  points. Damage other than characteristics and powers can be healed, as noted in the chart below. Power Healing cannot cure debilitating wounds unless the referee decides otherwise. (Debilitating wounds include things like death, loss of powers, and amnesia.) When healing characteristics or special damage, any left-over Healing points which don't heal a full damage point are totally lost. For example, if a 1 or 2 is rolled on DEX healing, nothing happens.

<b>Special Damage</b>	<b>cost</b>
Flash Blindness	3 per phase
Mental Control	2 per point of control
Weakness found by an opponent	5 for every point
Injury Point	Find Weakness score was exceeded
STUN taken from being hit	5 per point
Phase being stunned	1 per STUN
Transformation "BODY"	5 for the phase
END lost from exhausting disadvantage	2 per "BODY"
Presence shock	2 per disadvantage bonus multiple
Knockout	5 for every level

#### **Knockout      3 for +1**

Knockout is a characteristic your character never knew he had. Every time a normal character is knocked to **-10** STUN, the character loses speed in recovery. Such is also true when a character is at -20 STUN, -30 STUN, and -40 STUN. Each point of Knockout increases this base number of 10. For example, a character with 2 levels of knockout, suffers lower recovery at -12, -24, -36, and -48 STUN. A character's total Knockout cannot be higher than the total amount of BODY he has.

#### **Slipperiness      3 per +1**

Every 3 points of this power gives 1 point of Entangle defense. Entangle defense subtracts 1 from both the BODY and the resistant defense of any Entangle thrown on the character. Slipperiness also subtracts 1 from the BODY of the STR roll of anyone trying to grab the character. Not having the grapple defense is a  $\times 1/2$  point disadvantage on Slipperiness. Slipperiness costs no END to use.

#### **Temporal Fugue      30 for base (11 or less) / + 1 for 10**

Temporal Fugue is also known as "replay." It allows a character to replay immediate past events and take a different action, now that the character knows exactly what will happen. To use Temporal Fugue, the character must roll the ability, minus the number of 1/2-phase actions he wishes to reverse. If successful, the replay starts at that point, with all rolls and actions staying the same until the character interferes with the past. You can only replay an event once.

Example: In a battle, Orakle sees an agent leveling a blaster at her. Since he is just a normal agent, she decides to depend upon him missing — but the agent shoots and hits. *Before* damage is rolled, Orakle uses her Temporal Fugue power to undo his %-phase attack. She rolls a  $(12 - 1 = ) 11$ ; her attempt succeeds. When the agent levels his gun at her, she dives for cover. Play resumes at this point. The agent, seeing that Orakle has just jumped behind some boxes, lobs a grenade at her. Orakle, having already undone the attack once, cannot use her Temporal Fugue again.

Referees may choose to extend 1/2-phase actions to include non-combat or simultaneous moves. Thus, an ambush might be considered a single action for purposes of Temporal Fugue: the same goes for running down a blocked corridor. Though it is a power, Temporal Fugue has all the limitations of a skill: It cannot have power advantages or limitations, and it can't normally be placed in a power modifier. Only Temporal Fugue levels add to the Temporal Fugue roll. It is a no-phase action and it costs END.

#### **Transmutation      5 for 1d6**

This power changes inanimate objects into other inanimate objects. When buying the power, the character must state what specific change will take place; the mass of the object must remain reasonably constant, and Transmutation of objects into highly explosive, radioactive, or other harmful substances is not normally allowed.

For every 5 points put into this power, a character gets 1d6 of Transmutation. The attack is made normally, including range and size modifiers for small objects. Foci held by characters are allowed to add the DCV of the character. If the BODY rolled on the dice is greater than the DEF and BODY of the object, it has been Transmuted. If not, nothing happens.

Two power modifiers apply to Transmutation: Cumulative Effects and Partial Transmutation. Cumulative Effects costs + 1/2. It allows the BODY rolled in the attack, which surpass the DEF of the object, to accumulate over time. When the total BODY accumulated exceeds the BODY of the object, the object is Transmuted. Partial Transmutation also costs + 1/2 and allows any extra BODY which surpasses the object's DEF to immediately Transmute a part of the object. Partial Transmutation can only change the substance of an object, not its shape. Foci which have been partially Transmuted should check for failure using the Damage Check Chart in the CHAMPIONS II vehicle rules (p. 48).

Transmutation closely resembles a Transformation attack. But, while Transformation is based on the cost of a ranged killing attack, Transmutation is based on Tunnelling. While irreplaceable foci are not totally immune to the effects of Transmutation (just as heroes are not immune to Transformation), under certain circumstances a referee may allow them additional resistance. While this power may be used for monetary gain (turning lead into gold, etc.), excessive use of it would ruin the economy, and should be disallowed by the referee.

#### **Vertigo      5 points for 1d6**

This EGO-based power is a specialization of Mental Illusions. It works by disrupting the perception centers of the brain, causing the victim to lose all sense of balance. This has several effects, as shown below.

##### **EGO**

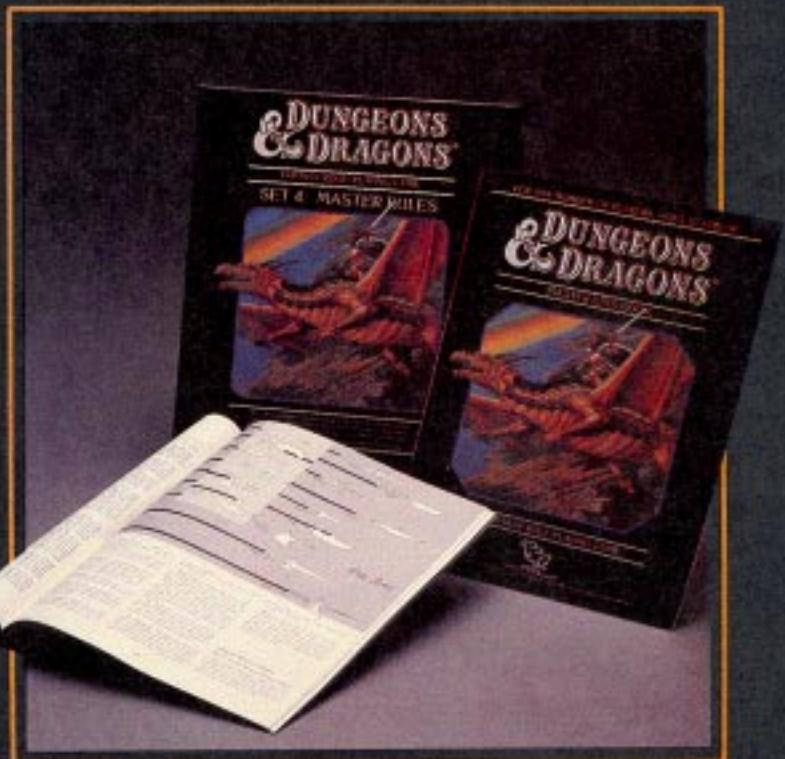
##### **mult.      Vertigo effects**

1x	Target takes a -1 to OCV, DCV, and DEX rolls (including all DEX-based skills).
2x	Target takes -3 to OCV, DCV, and DEX rolls. A DEX roll must be made to control flight or the target falls (optionally having uncertainty about its location)
3x	As per 2x above, and Target OCV on all ranged attacks drops to zero. The target's control of Light Illusions and Mental Illusions is lost. A DEX roll must be made to control any movement.
4x	As per 3x above, and the Target unable to stand. OCV and DCV is 0. The target is blinded.

EGO Defense applies against a vertigo attack. The effects remain, as long as the attacker keeps paying the END cost.

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# Charisma counts!

*A new charisma system for  
the VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game*

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NEWS ITEM: (Center City) The arch-criminal Killer Scumdog was foiled in his attempt to rob the Center City Orphanage today by the city's Commando Crusaders. Most of the Scumdog's henchmen were captured, but the archfiend himself escaped, and the heroes opted not to pursue him. "He may be scum, but we like him," said one hero.

NEWS ITEM: (Center City) Alfred Alford, who is alleged to be the confidence man known as Mr. Charm, was walking down the streets of the downtown section yesterday morning. The good citizens of Center City reacted warily toward him; within minutes, the Commando Crusaders were on hand to beat him into submission.

Speaking from the hospital's criminal ward, police spokesman Lt. Victor Broyko said no charges could be filed against Alford, in as much as he has not committed any crimes. When asked if assault charges would be filed against the Crusaders, Lt. Broyko asked "Why?"

Sound ridiculous? They are, but such scenarios *must* happen if FGU's VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game is played by the rules. The higher a villain's charisma, the greater the hatred a hero has for him. This only applies to NPC reactions, but it is illogical in any event. Besides, one can find many examples of love relationships between heroes and villains in the comics. Under

the existing rules, such relationships are difficult at best and impossible if both characters have charisms over 40.

The situation is even worse at the other end of the scale. Characters with low and negative charisms get positive reaction modifiers from characters on the opposite side of the law. In the case of a negative-charisma monster being encountered by a group of heroes as it ravages a city's downtown, the +8 modifier it gets means the *worst reaction possible* is a 9 — neutral!

Where the existing system fails is in using the charisma score for three separate purposes. That score serves to measure the charisma of the hero, the reputation of the hero, and the charisma of the hero's secret identity — things which should be treated separately.

A superhero in his secret identity often takes on a personality different from his super-identity, to help keep his super-identity hidden. In game terms, this means that the two identities have different charisma scores. A character who is a skilled actor can usually pick the charisma score he wants each persona to have, but a typical character will only be able to modify his charisma by a limited amount. Divide a character's intelligence score by 10 and round up. This number represents the number of points a character can credibly alter his charisma by unskilled acting ability alone. Charisma is not truly altered here; other characters have a chance of seeing through the act, and the actual

charisma score should be used for saves or powers whose ranges are determined by a charisma score.

For example, David (Concussion) Havens decides to make his costumed identity appear a little antisocial and make his secret identity a little more likable to enhance his disguise. With an intelligence of 13, he can alter his charisma of 11 by 2 points. Havens would then appear to have a charisma of 13, while Concussion would be a barely tolerable 9.

Training bonuses could be used to improve the disguise, either by increasing the point spread for varying charisms or by making it more difficult for someone to see through the act. Anyone who rolls his character's intelligence score times three or less will realize that someone else is putting on an act and varying charisma. For each level of training put into this roll, lower the score the character needs to penetrate a disguise (or disguised charisma) by 5%.

In this new system, charisma and reputation are treated as two separate but related characteristics. Charisma reflects how a character's personality directly affects other characters. Reputation reflects indirect consequences of one's actions and charisma.

A high charisma is obviously useful, and an extremely high charisma may even make other characters forget which side of the law the charismatic character is on. Of course, an occasional psychotic might despise a highly charis-

matic character, and personal grudges between characters can nullify the benefits charisma usually gives. Though it makes a difference whether a character is good or evil, the new Reaction Modifiers Table given with this article does not preclude positive reactions from others as does the original system.

A good reputation can't hurt, either. In game terms, a reputation is measured by reputation (rep) points. A character's base reputation score can be calculated by the following formula:  $(2 \times \text{charisma score} \times \text{level}) / 100 = \text{rep points}$ . To have any public recognition at all, a character must have at least 1 rep point, and any score less than one rounds down to zero. After a character acquires a reputation, fractional points can be valuable. Round any score over .5 up to the next number; if it is exactly .5, round it to the nearest even whole number.

There are many ways a character can acquire rep points. A referee may award or reduce them as per the rules on charisma points in section 2.9 in the VILLAINS & VIGILANTES rulebook; a character may acquire them through training (by cooperating with the media or hanging around criminal districts in disguise telling stories); or, outside influences can cause the character to gain or lose rep points. A local politician may decide to make the character's existence an election issue, or a best-selling novel about super-types may appear that prominently mentions the character. Even characters who make no effort to build a reputation will acquire one as they progress in levels.

For example, the 1st-level heroine Flame Rider has a charisma of 14 and thus a rep point score of 0.28, or 0. At 2nd level, her score would be 0.56 (still a 0). At 4th level, her score would reach 1.12 (1), and she will have a reputation. On the other hand, were she to use her first level of training to boost her rep point score by one point, she'd have 1.56 (2) rep points at 2nd level.

Characters can use rep points as charisma reaction modifiers. However, rep points do not have a specific positive or negative value assigned to them as charisma modifiers do. Charisma modifiers work in a alignment-specific manner with good, evil, and neutral categories being defined. Reputations are not that simple, and they vary greatly depending upon who is viewing the character. For example, the hero Streetfighter has a deserved reputation for using violence to subdue criminals. To the members of the Avenue Guardians, a group of karate

students who banded together to protect their neighborhoods from gang violence, Streetfighter's rep has a very positive effect. To the members of the Activists against Media Violence, Streetfighter's rep is a definite minus. Both groups are of good alignment, so alignment is not a valid indicator when figuring the effect of rep points.

In short, rep points do not measure the effect a character's reputation has on others; they only measure its magnitude. It's the referee's job to determine how a particular character's reputation is going to affect other people, assigning a positive or negative sign to the score in each instance.

While reputations will vary, certain aspects of a superhero's life are going to be fairly standard, and a few effects are going to be rather constant. A hero's (or villain's) rep should be able to counteract any unrealistic gains that his high charisma gives him. Characters on opposite sides of the law should have every opportunity to hate each others' guts, and rep points will help feed the fires.

Non-violence is a trait noticeably absent from most superbeings. Most characters are going to acquire their reputations over the course of a long career, and they are going to have to come out on top in quite a number of fights. Being tough is an inherent part of a supercharacter's reputation. All of the above should make people reacting to the character a little less likely to resort to violence. There will certainly be exceptions to this rule (the young punk out to make a name for himself by challenging "old hands" comes to mind), but such exceptions should be infrequent.

How big can a reputation get? In real life, a reputation can only get so big before ceasing to be credible. In game terms, a reputation score of 10 should be the limit, no matter how high the formula says it is. Certain exceptions can be made, as close friends and arch-enemies will believe stories about a hero long after the general public shakes its collective head in disbelief.

Another thing to keep in mind is that characters may have more than one reputation, or that their reputation may vary with different people. Depending on how much bookkeeping a referee wants to do, a single character could wind up with quite a few rep scores. If your campaign is set in a modern urban area, specific reputations could be targeted at the general public, the criminal underworld, other superheroes, law enforcement agencies, the government,

and covert-operations agencies.

When awarding or penalizing a character with rep points, a referee may add or subtract the points from any or all rep categories as he sees fit. Points generated through the formula should be treated as a base for all categories, since they represent the amount of reputation a character gets unintentionally. Points earned through training only alter one category, and the player must determine which category their character is going to go for first. (It's possible for a character to work out a publicity scheme that will cause the training for reputation to work simultaneously for additional categories, but it will cost Inventing points to do so.)

Other categories for classifying rep scores are possible and may even be necessary, depending on the circumstances of a referee's campaign, but too many categories will bog down the system. Limiting characters to a single reputation under any and all circumstances may not be very realistic, but it does save precious time and mental effort. If you feel comfortable with more reputation categories, by all means use them, but don't let a system designed to ease your work destroy your game.

## Reaction Modifiers Table

*Viewer is . . .*

<i>Charisma on same side of character</i>	<i>Charisma on same side of law</i>	<i>Charisma on opposite side of law</i>	<i>Charisma on opposite side of viewer</i>
Negative	-6	-12	-8
0-2	-4	-10	-6
3-5	-2	-8	-4
6-8	+0	-6	-2
9-11	+1	-4	+0
12-14	+2	-3	+1
15-17	+3	-2	+2
18-20	+4	-2	+3
21-25	+5	-1	+4
26-30	+6	-1	+5
31-35	+7	+0	+6
36-40	+8	+0	+7
41-45	+9	+1	+8
46-50	+10	+1	+9
51-55	+11	+2	+10
56-60	+12	+3	+11
61-65	+13	+4	+12
66-70	+14	+5	+13
71-75	+15	+6	+14
76-80	+16	+7	+15
81-85	+17	+8	+16
86-90	+18	+9	+17
91-95	*	+10	+18
96+	*	+11	*

\* — Receives maximum benefits.



# DEFENDERS OF THE FUTURE

*Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy™*



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by William Tracy

Over the years, the Marvel Universe™ has expanded to include various dimensions and alternate universes. The Guardians of the Galaxy™ come from an alternate future of the Marvel Universe, albeit one that diverged in the mid-

Twentieth Century, when a Guardian affected the life of his past counterpart.

In this alternate future, the Earth is successfully invaded and taken over by an alien race, the Badoon™, in the thirty-first century. The Badoon empire con-

trolled the Solar System for several years until a band of super-powered beings rallied the remaining humans and successfully pushed the aliens off Earth. Several more years were spent in attacking Badoon posts still in the system; then, the Guardians, with the aid of the time-traveling Defenders™, were able to drive the Badoon completely out of solar space.

After ensuring that Earth was safe, the Guardians set off to give aid to any in the Milky Way Galaxy who needed it, using their starship *Freedom's Lady*. Since then, the Guardians have made two trips to our current time, one of which caused the divergence of the time streams mentioned above.

Two separate Popularity scores are given. The first is the characters' Popularity in twentieth-century Earth, and the second is their Popularity in their future alternate universe. [Statistics for the alien Badoon will be given in a future article. —Editor]

## VANCE ASTRO™

Vance Astro, Major U.S.A.F.  
Ex-astronaut, now adventurer

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)

Agility: EXCELLENT (20)

Strength: TYPICAL (6)

Endurance: GOOD (10)

Reason: EXCELLENT (20)

Intuition: GOOD (10)

Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 56

Karma: 40

Resources: EXCELLENT

Popularity: 5/100

## Powers:

**TELEKINESIS.** Vance has a limited telekinetic ability that allows him to project beams of force. His power is only able to affect those within the area he occupies. The force beams can do up to Incredible damage if focused on one target, or can do Excellent damage to everyone around him. Vance is not able to produce other telekinetic powers. This power has an Incredible rating.

**SPECIAL BODY SUIT.** Vance was given a special body suit to keep him alive on his first interstellar voyage. It is made of a Remarkable material. If the suit is hit with any one attack that does more than 30 points of damage, the suit will tear and Vance's body will be instantly destroyed.

**Talents:** Vance Astro is able to fly any space vehicle and can pilot or drive

almost any other type of vehicle. Being an astronaut, Vance was also trained in physics, astronomy, electronics, engineering, and chemistry; his Reason is Remarkable in those areas. Vance was trained in martial arts in the Air Force.

**Background:** Vance Astrovik was the only son of a small-town butcher, and he joined the Air Force at the age of 18.

Three years later, Vance became the youngest person to ever join the U.S. astronaut-training program. In 1988, Vance volunteered for the first U.S. manned interstellar mission to the Alpha Centauri system. His ship, *Odysseus I*, was not able to travel faster than light, so he was provided with a special body-suit, described above, to preserve his body for the thousand-year trip. During the journey, he was placed in suspended animation; as a result, his latent psionic abilities surfaced.

Upon reaching the Centauri system, he discovered that Earth ships had reached the system 200 years earlier, thanks to the invention of a faster-than-light drive. Humans had been unable to intercept Vance's flight path. Upon reaching Centauri IV, Vance was given a hero's welcome.

A few days later, Centauri IV, along with other interstellar Earth colonies and the Earth itself, was invaded by the Badoon. Vance joined with several other heroes to drive the Badoon from Earth, and he went on to become the leader of the Guardians of the Galaxy.

While visiting the twentieth century on a time-traveling mission, Vance sought out his teenage self and tried to convince him not to become an astronaut, so that he would not have to experience his own future. The meeting of these two minds caused psychic feedback which brought the younger Astro's psionic abilities to the surface years before they were supposed to arise. This caused a divergence of the timestream, so the future of the original Vance Astro is not that of the current Marvel Universe.

### CHARLIE-27™ Charlie-27 Ex-space soldier, now adventurer

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 90  
Karma: 22  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0/100

#### Powers:

BODY ARMOR. Charlie-27's dense skin gives him Typical protection against physical attacks.

**Talents:** Charlie-27 was a space soldier, trained with guns, blunt and sharp weapons, wrestling, first aid, and related military matters.

**Background:** Charlie-27 was born on Jupiter in A.D. 2981, the son of two mine workers. Like all Earth colonists on Jupiter, Charlie-27 was bio-engineered to withstand the high gravity of the planet. The process made his body massive compared to the human norm.

At age 16, Charlie enlisted in the space militia of the United Lands of Earth. In A.D. 3007, when the Badoon invaded, Charlie became the only survivor of the Jupiter colony. He went on to become a member of the Guardians of the Galaxy.

### MARTINEX™ Martinex Former space technician, now adventurer

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: GOOD (10)  
Reason: EXCELLENT (20)  
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 60  
Karma: 32  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0/100

#### Powers:

COLD AND HEAT PROJECTION. Martinex is able to generate beams of intense heat from his right hand and beams of frigid cold from his left hand. These beams can do up to Shift X damage, but he can only use them four times each per day, due to the fact that the energy for the beams is taken from his body. Martinex can project the beams with Excellent Agility within a one-area range. This power is Unearthly.

BODY ARMOR. Most of Martinex's body is composed of silicon, providing him with Unearthly protection against fire-based and cold-based attacks.

**Talents:** Martinex went to the Pluvian Technical Institute and was trained in

engineering, physics, and electronics. His Reason is Remarkable in these areas.

**Background:** Martinex was born in A.D. 2986, the son of two professional technicians on the Earth colony on Pluto. Like all colonists of Pluto, Martinex was bio-engineered to withstand the local low temperatures and poisonous atmosphere. When the Badoon invaded, the planet was evacuated while Martinex stayed behind to destroy Pluto's advanced industrial complexes. Martinex was rescued by Charlie-27 and eventually became a member of the Guardians of the Galaxy.

### YONDU™ Yondu Udonta Adventurer

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: GOOD (10)  
Endurance: GOOD (10)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Psyche: REMARKABLE (30)

Health: 40  
Karma: 76  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0/100

#### Powers:

MYSTIC EMPATHY. Yondu is a mystic who is able to sense and form a rapport with local animals and plant life. Using this ability in the wilderness, he is able to sense objects and life forms that are not a part of the natural ecology of the area. He is also able to find specific elements within the area, such as a specific plant or animal. Yondu is able to sense and pinpoint mystical, psychic, and magical forces and beings, and he can sense their presence and activities automatically. These powers are Unearthly in nature and range.

UNIQUE WEAPON. Yondu uses a bow and a quiver of arrows, the arrows being made of *yaka*, a sound-sensitive metal only found on Yondu's planet, Centauri IV. By whistling, Yondu is able to control the direction of the arrow's flight after he has shot it. Unless Yondu is unable to whistle, each arrow has an Incredible Control rank and can even be made to return to him.

**Talents:** Yondu is a trained woodsman and is an expert with bows.

**Background:** Yondu's people were characterized by blue skin and a red dorsal fin on their heads. Yondu was in

the wilderness, undergoing his ritual of manhood ordeal, when the Badoon destroyed the Earth colony on the planet and then destroyed all other natives. Yondu was able to escape with the aid of Vance Astro, and he became one of the Guardians of the Galaxy after liberating Earth.

### **STARHAWK™** **Stakar and Aleta** **Adventurer**

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)  
Reason: AMAZING (50)  
Intuition: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Psyche: MONSTROUS (75)

Health: 80  
Karma: 225  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0/100

#### **Powers:**

**RESISTANCE TO POISON.** Starhawk has Monstrous immunity to most diseases, poisons, and illnesses caused by radiation.

**LIGHT CONTROL.** Starhawk is able to manipulate light energy from any source, changing it into energy that he/she can use to perform superhuman feats. He/she can project beams of heat or force, create temporary bridges of solid light, and penetrate energy fields by jamming their wavelengths. This power is Uearthly in nature, though the strength of particular powers used is directly proportional to the ambient light energy within Starhawk's area. Thus, a Good-intensity light (normal daylight) would allow Starhawk to shoot force bolts at Good range doing Good damage, create light bridges lasting 10 minutes, or penetrate Good-intensity energy fields.

**FLIGHT.** Starhawk is able to fly using his/her light control ability, reaching Uearthly speeds in space and Monstrous speeds in a planet's atmosphere. Starhawk's suit contains a life-support system that can work indefinitely, and it will deploy winglike structures to catch and use the solar wind. Starhawk's Agility increases to levels equal to his speed when he flies, with a minimum Agility rating of Good.

**MENTAL POWER.** Starhawk is able to sense abnormal concentrations and expenditures of energy and disruptions in the space-time continuum. This

power is Class 1000 in nature and range.

**Talents:** Starhawk is an expert in almost all sciences and is a scholar.

**Background:** In the early twentieth century, a great war began on the planet Arcturus IV between two factions, one wanting natural childbirth and the other believing that babies should be bio-engineered in the laboratory. The war ended in a nuclear catastrophe.

More of the laboratory-bred natives survived than the natural Arcturians. The laboratory-bred ones mutated into horrible creatures, and the surviving natural Arcturians formed bands called Reavers, whose main task was to destroy the mutants. On the raid in which the last of the mutants were destroyed, a Reaver named Ogord™ found a baby male mutant who looked normal. Ogord received permission to raise the baby as his own; the child, whom Ogord named Stakar, grew close to his step-sister Aleta as the years passed.

In time, Stakar and Aleta entered some ancient ruins and discovered a learning helmet. They both struggled for the helmet and it malfunctioned, converting Aleta into energy. She entered into a religious idol of a hawk-god, animated it, and began attacking the bands of Reavers looking for her and her brother. Stakar used the helmet to form a telepathic link with her and then somehow merged his being with hers. The resulting being left the world and roamed the universe. After several centuries, Starhawk met the Guardians of the Galaxy and helped them chase the Badoon from Earth's solar system.

### **NIKKI™** **Nikki** **Adventurer**

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)  
Strength: TYPICAL (6)  
Endurance: GOOD (10)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: GOOD (10)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 46  
Karma: 26  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0/100

#### **Powers:**

**SPECIAL RESISTANCE.** Nikki's skin contains a large amount of a specially mutated form of melanin. This and several other mutations give Nikki

Unearthly protection against attacks using ultraviolet radiation and Monstrous protection against heat-based and infrared-energy attacks.

**PROTECTED SENSES.** Nikki's eyes have been altered so that they have Incredible protection from blinding light.

**Talents:** Nikki is a marksman and weapons master. She is trained to be an expert with guns, thrown weapons, and blunt and sharp-edged weapons. She is also skilled in martial arts.

**Weapons:** Nikki usually carries two weapons: a neuronic-frequency stunner and a pulsed, high-powered, green laser pistol. The laser pistol does Remarkable damage and has Typical range. Its power clip contains enough energy for 10 shots. Anyone hit by the stunner must make an Endurance FEAT roll in the yellow area of the column. If they fail the roll, they will be paralyzed and stunned for 100 rounds minus their Endurance rank number. The stunner has Typical range and has a power clip that has enough energy for 10 shots.

**Background:** Nikki was the only daughter of two administrators of the mining colony on the planet Mercury, and was born in A.D. 2997. Like all colonists on Mercury, Nikki was bio-engineered to withstand high temperatures and ultraviolet radiation. The process gave her very dark skin and specialized eyes. When Nikki was a child, the Badoon invaded the Solar System and killed all other Mercury colonists. Nikki managed to escape in a spaceship, but she soon ran out of food. Luckily, she discovered an abandoned cargo ship and boarded it. For the next seven years, she lived alone on the cargo ship, whose life-support system worked but whose communicators and engines did not. She was rescued by the Guardians of the Galaxy, who had driven the Badoon out of the Solar System, and she has stayed on as a team member.

### ***Freedom's Lady***

**Freedom's Lady** is an Annihilator-class Earth battleship, owned and operated by the Guardians of the Galaxy. The ship has Uearthly speed, Amazing control, and a Remarkable body. It is protected by an almost invulnerable defense shield, that provides the ship with Shift X protection. The ship has five laser cannons (Damage: Incredible, Range: Monstrous) and two torpedo launchers (Body: Good, Control: Incredible, Speed: Incredible, Damage: Monstrous).

# The MARVEL® -Phile

by Jeff Grubb



## Defenders™ Ensemble!

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For the 100th issue of DRAGON® Magazine, let's correct an old oversight and deal with one of the groups most requested by the readers of this column, the Defenders™. We have, in other products, described the Fantastic Four™, the X-Men™, Alpha Flight™, and the Avengers™ (both coasts). But the

Defenders have eluded us to date.

The current team of Angel™, Iceman™, Beast™, leader Candy Southern™, Moondragon™, Gargoyle™, Cloud™ and Valkyrie™ have only been mentioned in bits and pieces. The first four listed take their bows in MHAC-5, Project Wideawake, while Beast and

Moondragon appear in MHAC-2, *Avengers Assembled!*. But, to date, we haven't talked about Cloud, Gargoyle, and Valkyrie. This is a serious oversight and, of course, our purpose in these columns is to correct oversights (heh, heh, heh). So set your sights on these sites, the rest of the Defenders!

### GARGOYLE™ Isaac Christians

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)  
Agility: POOR (4)  
Strength: REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)  
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 94

Karma: 26

Resources: POOR

Popularity: 4

#### Known powers:

BODY ARMOR. Isaac's thick hide gives him Excellent protection from physical damage.

FLIGHT. While the small wings on his back are not powerful enough to grant him true flight, Gargoyle can still fly by manipulating bio-mystical energies, letting him move 3 areas per round.

REGENERATION. The same bio-mystical

force that powers his flight lets Gargoyle regenerate damage at an Amazing rate. In addition, he may regain lost body parts through regeneration, and he is immune to the effects of disease and normal aging.

BIO-MYSTICAL LIFE FORCE CONTROL. Gargoyle can manipulate the bio-mystical life force of others, allowing him to remove up to an Incredible amount of Health from a target on touch. This loss of Health lasts only 2 rounds, being quickly regenerated, but if a victim's Health drops below 0 as a result of such an attack, the victim will die (with resultant Karma losses for Gargoyle). Gargoyle can control how much Health he will take from a victim, but must announce before the attack the amount of Health to be taken (e.g., a Typical attack would remove 6 points of Health).

FORCE BOLTS. Gargoyle can also redirect his own bio-mystical life force into force bolts that can do up to Incredible damage, but as many points will be

removed from his Health as were used in the bolt attack. This loss of Health will last for 2 rounds.

ANTIMAGICAL FORCE FIELD. Isaac may also manipulate his personal life force to project a force field giving him protection from magical energies and attacks. This force field functions at the Monstrous level and costs 10 of Isaac's Health points for each round of operation. Health lost by using the force field may only be healed in the normal manner.

**Gargoyle's story:** Isaac Christians was the mayor of the small Virginia town of Christiansboro, a town founded by his family. Distressed by the decline of his town and the rise of local poverty, Christians began to seriously explore the dark arts he had encountered in his travels following the First World War. Christians contacted the extra-dimensional creature known as Avarrish, and he offered the self-proclaimed demon his service in return for a solution to his town's ills. The demon agreed and traded Chris-

tians's life spirit with that of a gargoyle animated years before, one that had been captured and enslaved by Avarrish and his allies.

As the Gargoyle, Christians kidnapped Patsy (Hellcat™) Walker on orders from his master, but he rebelled when he learned that Walker and her fellow Defenders were marked for death by the demons. Gargoyle and the Defenders defeated the demonic alliance, but at a price: Christians was trapped in his gargoyle form.

Christians has remained with the Defenders since that time. He has helped save his home town from the revenge of his former demonic allies, had his demonic body controlled by a hostile mage, and has met and defeated the original Gargoyle, who was trapped in (and perished in) Christians's human form. As the oldest mortal member of the Defenders, Gargoyle is often the voice of patience and reason.

### CLOUD™

#### Real name unrevealed

Fighting: GOOD (10)

Agility: GOOD (10)

Strength: TYPICAL (6)

Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)

Reason: TYPICAL (6)

Intuition: GOOD (10)

Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 56

Karma: 26

Resources: POOR

Popularity: 6

#### Known powers:

ALTERNATE FORMS. Cloud can take three forms: one as a young woman wrapped in mist, the second as a young man similarly wrapped in mist, and lastly as an amorphous, gaseous cloud. Which of these three incarnations are her/his true form is unknown at this writing. All of Cloud's powers are usable only in her/his cloud form.

CLOUD FORM. Cloud can become a small cloud about four feet in diameter. This cloud is made up of various gases excluding oxygen. In cloud form, she/he can surround a single air-breathing target and attempt to smother it (requiring an Endurance FEAT roll for the target, or it will be rendered unconscious for 1-10 rounds). Cloud may fly up to 3 areas per round while in cloud form and can move through narrow cracks and openings. She/he communicates telepathically to others when in this state.

LIGHTNING. When in cloud form, Cloud can fire lightning bolts of up to Remarkable damage, directed at targets up to 3 areas away.

**Cloud's story:** Very little is known about Cloud; at the time of this writing, mysteries are accumulating with regard to her/his true origins. The Defenders first encountered Cloud in female form as an operative for Professor Power™, a world-beating madman who had reorganized the Secret Empire™. Cloud and other operatives tried to capture the android Vision™ but were thwarted by the Defenders. Cloud left the Secret Empire after suddenly experiencing new memories that seemed to show that Power killed Cloud's parents. (These memories, however, may be false ones implanted by Power or another source.) Cloud fled to the Defenders, and after a battle between the team and the Secret Empire, Cloud joined the group as a full member.

Throughout this period, Cloud appeared to be either a cloud or a 17-year-old woman. Soon after joining the Defenders, Cloud fell in love with Moondragon. Unable to resolve these feelings toward the female telepath, Cloud changed sex to a young man. Since that time, Cloud has shifted between the two forms, but her/his true origins remain a mystery.

### VALKYRIE™

#### Brunnhilda of the Valkyrior

Fighting: MONSTROUS (75)

Agility: REMARKABLE (30)

Strength: AMAZING (50)

Endurance: AMAZING (50)

Reason: TYPICAL (6)

Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)

Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 205

Karma: 36

Resources: TYPICAL

Popularity: 15

#### Known powers:

BODY ARMOR. Like all Asgardians, Valkyrie has Good protection from all physical attacks.

WEAPON: DRAGONFANG. Carved from the tooth of an extra-dimensional dragon by an Oriental wizard, Valkyrie's sword Dragonfang was given to her by Doctor Strange™. The blade is made of material with Unearthly strength, and when wielding it Valkyrie attacks on the Unearthly column. She can inflict Monstrous damage on the hack-&-slash table

or up to Amazing damage on the Sluggfest column by using the flat of the blade. (She will use the latter attack to avoid slaying her opponents).

WEAPON: IRON SPEAR. Valkyrie also wields an iron spear which can inflict Amazing hack-&-slash damage and can be thrown up to 10 areas for Incredible damage.

MOUNT ARAGORN. Formerly the mount of the Black Knight™, this snow-white Pegasus was given by the Knight to Valkyrie and is faithful to his mistress. Aragorn can run at 5 areas per round, fly at 10 areas per round, and has the following stats:

F	A	S	E	Health
GOOD	EXCE	REMA	INCR	100

**Talents:** Valkyrie is skilled at martial arts, sharp weapons (swords), and thrown weapons.

**Valkyrie's story:** The Asgardian Brunnhilda was chosen by Odin™ to lead the Valkyrior, a group of nine goddesses who brought the souls of the honored dead from the battlefield to Valhalla. She performed well until Odin ceased all dealings with Earth around A.D. 1000. At that time, the Valkyrior were disbanded, and Brunnhilda roamed Asgard looking for adventure.

Brunnhilda finally encountered Amora the Enchantress™, but the life of adventure that Amora offered was dishonorable, and the leader of the Valkyrior rebelled. The Enchantress ensorcelled Brunnhilda, keeping her body in suspended animation while bestowing Brunnhilda's powers on herself or others. In this fashion, Amora led an all-female group of super-powered individuals against the Avengers, but she was defeated.

While serving as a temporary ally of the early Defenders, Amora granted the Valkyrie's powers and consciousness to a mortal madwoman named Barbara Norriss. Valkyrie fought beside the Defenders for several years in her mortal body before regaining her immortal form. She has decided to remain with the Defenders and was chosen by Odin to watch and guard Moondragon, in hopes of teaching the telepath humility and to guard humanity from the powers of Moondragon's darker side. Valkyrie bears some hard feelings toward Odin for disbanding the Valkyrior and for ignoring her plight as a captive of the Enchantress, and she would rather remain on Earth than return to Asgard.

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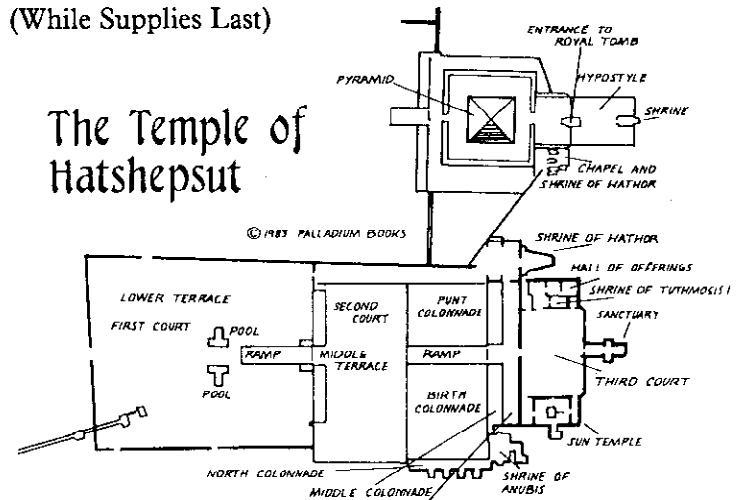
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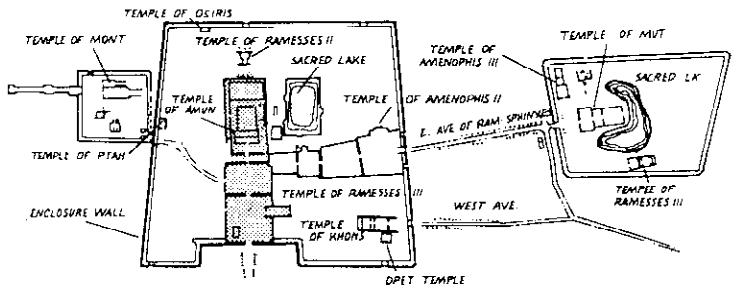
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# The chance of a lifetime

## BATTLESYSTEM™ project was a designer's dream

by Doug Niles

The opportunity to design a mass-combat system for the AD&D® game was one of those chances that a game designer gets once in a lifetime. From the moment I received the assignment, I began to wrestle with the multitude of problems that the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules would necessarily overcome.

The original concept was first seen as a small folio system, but it grew quickly. Everyone had ideas about the potential utilizations of the game. The project finally crystallized into a series of ambitious objectives, and I was locked in an office to hammer out the first design draft.

Among the objectives that "Bloodstone Pass," as the game was then called, was supposed to accomplish were the following:

- to handle fantasy battles involving troops numbering anywhere from a few dozen to several thousand;
- to use a scale that allowed individual action by high-level PCs and NPCs, yet handled large numbers of massed orcs, peasants, and low-level types in general;
- to maintain the spirit and, as much as possible, the letter of the AD&D game rules throughout;
- to make the supplement equally playable with or without miniatures; and,
- to make it useful for streamlining the encounters of a normal AD&D campaign, as well as adding the new dimension of mass combat for any players who wanted it.

The list went on and on, but those were the high points. Although a little taken aback by the extent of the project, I had lots of aid in the form of suggestions and play-testers, and the rules began to take shape.

One point that stood out throughout the project was the strong feeling that an AD&D world is not simply a medieval world with magic slapped over it. Instead, it seemed that societies which had evolved with the common use of magic spells, items, and creatures would have become significantly different from the medieval societies of history.

Naturally, these fundamental differences would affect the way these societies waged war. Supplies, formations, tactics, heroic combat — even the terrain of the battlefield

would have to be re-evaluated in the light of a magical world. Obviously, simply adding magic rules to a standard set of ancient or medieval miniatures rules would not reflect these changes.

The BATTLESYSTEM supplement does

not dilute any of the fantastic "realities" of the AD&D universe. Magic, in a concentrated dose of high-enough level, will determine the outcome of a great many battles — just as it has decided the outcome of a great many smaller-sized AD&D gaming encounters. This assumption underlies every rule in the set. Players who want to recreate an accurate depiction of a battle between a Roman cohort and band of Huns might not find what they're looking for in these rules. But if you wonder what would happen to 1,000 orcs that try to overrun a forest protected by 250 elves, you've come to the right place!

### Creating the system

The first problem to resolve, fundamental to virtually all games, was the question of scale. How big should the counters and miniatures bases be? How many of each creature should be represented by a single figure? How much "real time" would the events that take place in a BATTLESYSTEM turn require?

I selected counter sizes after a few meetings with the miniatures sculptors in our 3-D department and a look at the typical miniatures base sizes throughout the industry. Because of the variety of creature sizes used in the game, three different dimensions were employed. The S, M, and L designations in the AD&D game provided a nice reference to all creatures. Since the degree of flexibility allowed by individual counters or figures works well in the context of a role-playing game, the structure of massed formations grew from the idea of individually mounted, separate figures instead of large bases containing many miniatures.

In determining the number of creatures represented by a single figure or counter, we dealt with the problem of varying numbers of hit dice. This was solved with a sliding scale; at one end, creatures of 4 HD or less are represented at a 10:1 ratio, while at the other end those with 9 or more dice use a 2:1 ratio. Individuals, especially PCs and major NPCs, are represented at a 1:1 ratio. Ideally, players can use miniature PC figures from their campaign on the field of battle, whether the rest of the forces are displayed with counters or miniatures.

Finally, a time scale was needed. Although the AD&D game provided some time referents — turns and rounds — neither seemed to be the best length of time for a mass-combat turn. Melee rounds, at the AD&D level of lethality, would yield battles

that were unrealistically brief and far too bloody. Turns, on the other hand, diluted the effect of magic spells too drastically, unless one allowed magic-users to cast 10 spells in every BATTLESYSTEM turn.

The deviously simple solution, perfectly in keeping with the sliding scale of both units and figure ratios, was to create a "game round" of unspecified duration. A game round is longer than a melee round but shorter than a turn. In a battle between a few hundred troops, a game round might represent 2-3 minutes of real time, while a battle involving thousands of warriors calls for game rounds of perhaps 7-10 minutes in real time. This ratio is built into the rules and has no deleterious effect on play.

The next issues that reared their ugly heads were the rules for unit organizations and formations. Once again, the assumption about the far-reaching effects of magic prevented a simple adaptation of historical unit formations. Imagine the results of a fireball dumped into the middle of a close formation of swordsmen or archers!

An analysis of the use of artillery-type spells — *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, *ice storms*, and the like — yielded the conclusion that AD&D warfare would have as many similarities to modern warfare as it would to medieval combat, even to the extent of having airpower and poison gas! This conclusion indicated that the use of massed, tightly closed formations would be of much less value in the AD&D world than similar formations had been historically. Thus, every regular unit has the option of opening up its formation to minimize losses caused by such attack forms.

Similarly, the attrition caused by enemy missile fire can be extremely lethal in the AD&D world, especially if halflings or elves do the firing. This provided another incentive for open, flexible formations.

Units still needed to have the shock-attack potential provided by tight concentrations of fighters and large masses of troops. There is a place for heavy infantry and cavalry forces, which are especially effective in a low-magic environment — i.e., a battlefield where magic spells of the 5th level of power and above are rare or nonexistent. In a high-magic environment, however, infantry must be able to move quickly and open up formations in order to survive and close with the enemy. Once again, the flexibility of the AD&D system provided the solution: Players can design their own forces with the armor class (and corresponding movement rates) desired.

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Thursday	2100	Weaving Illusions III: Overdosing On Technique
Friday	1300	Campaign Design II: Creating The Campaign
Friday	1700	And Then You See Six Balrogs . . .
Friday	1900	Castles, Knights, And Hardly Any Cash Part I
Friday	2100	Castles, Knights, And Hardly Any Cash Part II
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Saturday	1300	A 30- By 40-Foot Room, Nothing Interesting
Saturday	1900	Magic Swords And Mighty Shields
Saturday	2100	The Magical World
Sunday	0900	Castles, Knights, And Hardly Any Cash Part I
Sunday	1100	Castles, Knights, And Hardly Any Cash Part II
Sunday	1300	Role Up A Character
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**AUG. 22 - 25, 1985**

Two areas of particular interest in the supplement were the role of player characters on the battlefield and rules for command and morale. Heroic combat — the one-on-one fighting of two high-level characters, or of a character and a monster — was another area that required special attention. The BATTLESYSTEM supplement, with its roots in role-playing, needed to provide solid rules for the use of both PCs and NPCs.

The command rules evolved easily. The AD&D charisma rating provided a ready measure of a character's innate ability to command, and experience level provided a good approximation of rank.

Heroic combat went through a few more convolutions before ending up in the relatively simple state that it is now. Originally, a system was designed having detailed morale benefits and penalties for the victor and loser of heroic combat, as well as penalties for declining to accept challenges. Play-testing soon proved these rules to be unnecessary. Because of the importance of commanders and the power of high-level characters operating alone, high-level PCs naturally tended to seek out powerful opponents and engage in duels of heroic combat. In the context of a role-playing campaign, where inter-character relationships can provide additional motivation for seeking out and engaging in these duels, the original rules proved even more superfluous. The simple fact is that a reasonably bal-

anced battle will often be decided by the actions of a few heroes or villains. Additional rules to motivate characters to fight these duels seemed heavy-handed.

Certain campaigns, of course, might call for morale effects to result from heroic combat. DRAGONLANCE® module DL-8, *Dragons of War*, provides a good example of these effects. If a major PC accepts a duel with a dragon, the morale of the PC's forces can be improved significantly — even if that PC dies in the fight! DMs are encouraged to create these kinds of modifiers in their campaigns, where appropriate.

The basic melee combat system would normally have been the hardest part of the project. Here, however, I was fortunate to have the use of a Combat Results Table designed by Bruce Nesmith and Zeb Cook during a previous stint with the project. (As Michael Dobson has mentioned in the article that accompanies this one, the "Bloodstone Pass" project had been on and off the schedule for several years.)

This table provided an accurate conversion of average AD&D combat damage applied to large numbers of troops and creatures. We started by converting THAC0 (the base chance to hit AC 0) to something called an "Attack Rating" (AR), which is affected by the ratio of creatures to figures, and may also be modified by certain factors as per the AD&D combat rules (such as striking from behind). Once the

AR of a certain combatant (which may be an individual, or may be a large group of creatures) is determined, the result of a roll of 2d6 is added to it. This number is cross-referenced on the Combat Results Table with the column corresponding to the amount of damage done by the weapon type(s) being wielded. The table was structured so that AR plus 7 (the average result of a 2d6 roll), when read on the appropriate damage column, results in average damage for the attack. The damage figure determined for a certain attack is simply multiplied by the number of figures attacking and immediately applied to the enemy force.

The 2d6 roll works very well in this context, providing consistency plus the potential for variability at the same time. Results will tend to average out when many different creatures or characters make attacks. On the other hand, the chance of extreme results on the 2d6 roll (2 or 12, to name the most extreme) still allows the prospect of a highly successful or unsuccessful attack.

The other nice thing about this system is that you only need to roll 2d6 once for each side for each game round to determine the outcome of that attack. There are arithmetic computations to be made, of course, but most of them are simple and come easily to anyone acquainted with the AD&D melee system.

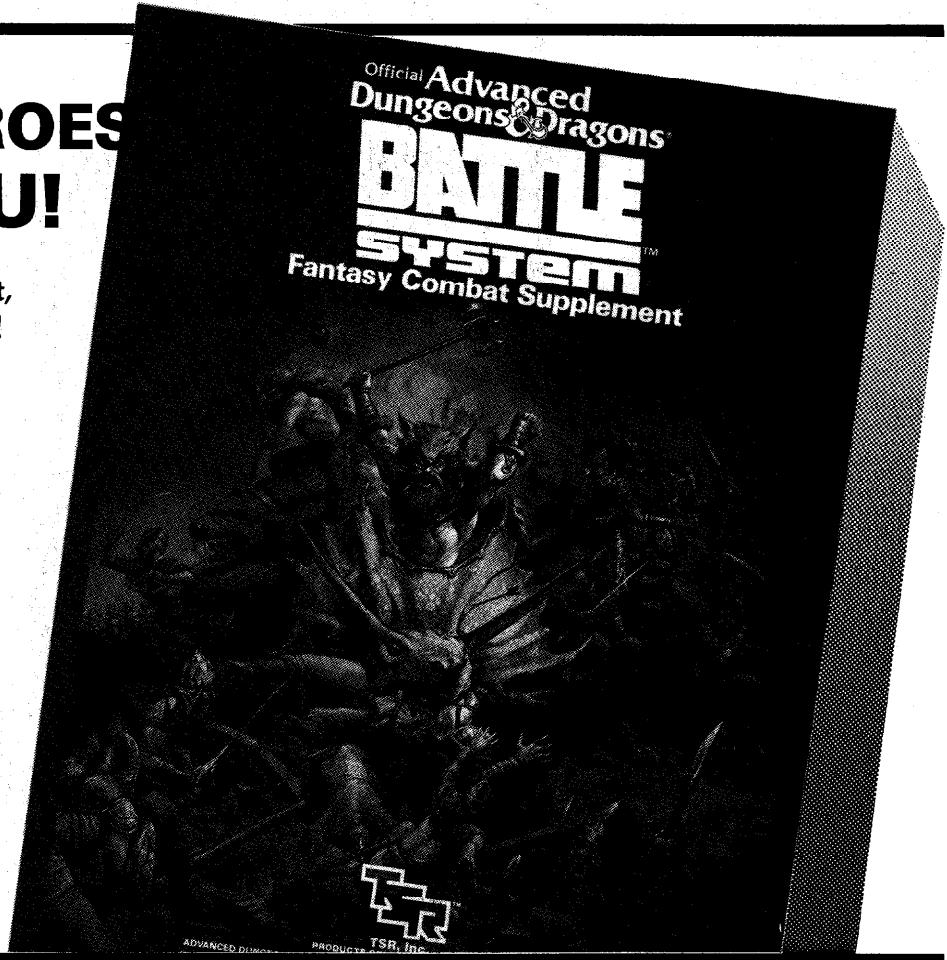
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AD&D concepts of armor class, variable dice of damage, bonuses for flank and rear attacks, number of attacks per round, etc., plus THAC0, the BATTLESYSTEM rules can easily be added to a campaign.

At this point in their development, the rules practically began to design themselves. So many of the AD&D rules date back to the game's origins in miniatures gaming — the *Chainmail* rules, to be specific — that concepts for missile ranges, movement rates, field artillery (ballistae and catapults), modifications for charges and meeting charges, and even maneuverability ratings for flying creatures, could be taken right from the *Players Handbook* or *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Finally, specific spells and magical abilities had to be addressed. Playtesting showed that I had a bigger job ahead of me than I'd originally thought. For example, Zeb and I were playing one of the first games to employ the magic rules. I commanded the evil forces and made a strong push with several units of goblin and orc infantry, opening what I thought was an ideal hole for my killer force of mounted orcs on war boars. Zeb could only muster a feeble force of 0-level humans backed by a wizard of only middling level, and I gleefully prepared to trample his rabble into the dust. Sure, he might drop a *fireball* or *lightning bolt* into my ranks, but orcs mounted on war boars are **tough**. I anticipated a few casualties but

knew that I would give far more than I got.

To make a long story short, you won't **believe** how big an area can be affected by a simple *rock to mud* spell. My entire war boar unit — the spearhead of my army — sank into the ground right in front of Zeb's feeble line of humans. All of a sudden, the battlefield had a very different look to it.

After I retrieved the dice I had thrown across the room, we sat down to discuss the implications of this magical potency. After all, it wasn't a 50th-level magic-user that sank my unit — he was only 10th level! The problem was how to determine whether or not the ground on the battlefield was rock, gravel, or dirt. This determination was needed before deciding the success of the spell, of course.

Several more experiences with potent magic spells, including the likes of *hallucinatory terrain* (and illusions of all types), *charm plants* (How much damage does a lilac bush do?), and *wish* convinced me that a referee was necessary to adjudicate high-magic battles. Otherwise, because of the open-ended nature of the AD&D game, too many battles would break down into fruitless arguments between the gamers.

Of course, the referee can be the DM in a players-vs.-DM type of battle. In this case, the DM holds the same responsibilities as he has during a normal campaign, and the players fall into their normal roles of cooperating to combat the forces of evil, which are run by the Dungeon Master.

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However, a battle that is not part of a campaign or that occurs between different player-controlled factions within the same campaign requires a neutral referee in order to run a smooth battle. How would you feel if your opponent suddenly produced an *invisible* cavalry force, directly behind your carefully fortified lines? The referee can see that such events (which are quite possible, by the way) are handled fairly and within the rules.

We put this idea into effect immediately, adding a referee to all playtests where spells of 3rd level or higher were employed. This considerably speeded up play and allowed the characters to attempt things that would not be allowable otherwise. The use of *invisible* troops and movement through other planes are two areas where the referee proves his worth. The manipulation of terrain and weather soon became common as well. In all of these cases, the use of a referee allows players to attempt all sorts of tricks to deceive and surprise the opponent. In cases involving *invisibility* or *illusions*, where the opponent has a reasonable chance of detecting the strategem unbeknownst to the sneaky player, the referee makes all such *detection* rolls secretly. Thus, both players remain in the dark as to the extent of the opponent's battlefield intelligence.

The culmination of this testing was the grand battle described in Michael Dobson's article, utilizing three planes and a host of strange creatures. Bruce Nesmith refereed

that melee, and afterward he provided many more constructive suggestions for the rules. (Of course, after he was subjected to a full day of harassment and rules-lawyering by eight moderately berserk gamers, several of Bruce's suggestions were not only unconstructive but unprintable!)

By this time in the game's development, favorite tactics were beginning to emerge. Hardly a battle went by without *dig* spells fortifying the front. *Hallucinatory terrain* in all its manifestations spread across the battlefields. And, of course, the reliable *fireball* remained ever popular. As the rules drew near to their final shape, final adjustments for the effects of *control weather* spells and night battles were added. More special magic considerations appeared, each receiving its treatment in the ever-expanding "Magic" section of the rules.

#### Altering the rules

The BATTLESYSTEM supplement has undergone a steady evolution into the form finally released. Naturally, this evolution continues during the playtesting of the modules and adventures using the BATTLESYSTEM rules. During this testing, a few more procedures have shown themselves useful in streamlining the game. I'll make some suggestions about these, but don't regard them as official rule alterations. If everyone in your campaign prefers one of these options, feel free to use it to amplify or replace existing rules systems.

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**Morale penalties for small units:** Morale penalties apply to all units that do not include at least twelve figures. Although this works fine for preparing armies for a large-scale battle, it often inflicts a harsh penalty on the character who wishes to create a unit for campaign purposes but cannot afford to pay the wages of 120 troops. Thus, this morale penalty can be ignored when troops are organized into smaller units for use during a campaign.

**Simplifying leader rosters:** When a player must record a roster block for a relatively generic leader, this can result in bookkeeping that could otherwise be dispensed with. For example, 180 orcs arrive at the battle, led by an orc chieftain as described in the *Monster Manual*. In cases like this, do not fill out a separate roster block for the leader. Instead, under the unit's roster entry for the unit commander, simply note the name and command radius of the leader and mark its location with a 1/2" counter.

**Small numbers of figures in combat:** When one or two counters of relatively low-level creatures engage each other in combat, several game rounds can pass before either side has the opportunity to wound an opposing figure. To increase the chance of these small units taking damage, and consequently speed up battles between skirmishers or within confined spaces, allow damage equal to 10% (instead of 25%) of the victim's hit dice to cause a wound. This rule adds greatly to the excitement of small-unit combat.

**Multiple weapon types within a single unit:** The rules require all members of a unit to be armed with the same weapon type. This simplifies and speeds up combat, but multiple weapon types can be used without a great deal of added complexity. Allow players to arm different ranks of a formation with different weapon types. For example, the first line of figures might be armed with swords, the next with spears, and the third with pikes, to get the most melee power from the unit. This option carries a restriction, however: Units designed this way cannot alter their frontage so that figures employing different weapon types end up occupying the same rank of the formation.

### Getting a campaign started

Players should have little difficulty learning the BATTLESYSTEM rules, since they draw so heavily from the AD&D and D&D games. Nonetheless, the idea of moving a hundred or more pieces around during an encounter might be a little foreign to many role players. A few suggestions are offered here to make the transition easier.

Play a small, low-level battle first. This acquaints you with the BATTLESYSTEM combat rules without trouble, allowing players to become familiar with the Combat Results Table and figure movement without having to worry about more complicating aspects of mass combat such as spells, invisibility and so forth.

Play a few battles in which the highest level of a PC or monster is no greater than 4. Use about 4-6 units per side and be sure to include at least one cavalry and one missile-firing unit on each side.

After playing one or two battles at this level, use your judgment to decide how big and how complicated you want your BATTLESYSTEM encounters to be. Remember, a large battle with low-level characters is not very complicated, whereas a small engagement with 15th-level magic-users on one or both sides can become very complicated, indeed.

Dungeon Masters should consider Michael Dobson's suggestions for working BATTLESYSTEM into your campaign. Certainly, there are an infinite number of scenario possibilities, and some of the circumstances within your own campaign will lend themselves to mass combat situations.

Allow your players to select and design their own units, if this is appropriate to your campaign. This will get the players more involved with the fate of their units on the field and more likely to make reasonable decisions in a role-playing sense. All in all, everyone will have more fun with the system if they are allowed to create the types and sizes of units that they desire.

Allow characters to advance themselves and their units upward in levels, as explained under BATTLESYSTEM rules Case 16.0, in the campaign rules. This assures that the players gradually move into more complex levels of battle after learning

the systems and gaining experience at using their troops.

Of course, caution is necessary when allowing players to design their own units, especially in the area of troop availability. For example, a player should not be able to recruit 180 5th-level fighter/magic-user elves, just because he thinks they would make a good unit. The DM must ascertain how many elves are available for this purpose in this area of the campaign world, what levels they are, and why they would be willing to serve this PC.

With mercenaries, of course, money provides the motivation for the troops. Many humans and demi-humans, however, will need a more significant reason for joining a unit, usually involving a special cause that the unit is supporting. Other possible incentives for troops include the repayment of a debt of gratitude owed to the unit commander (he saved the whole village once, so everyone has to serve a term in his army), feudal duties to a liege lord, or simply the loyalty of a large band of henchmen and hirelings.

Once a few military units exist in your campaign, the dynamics of PC and NPC interaction will probably bring about reasons enough for battle. Depending on your philosophy as DM, you may wish to allow or disallow PC-vs.-PC battles, which can become very costly to the characters involved. A situation more in keeping with the cooperative spirit of the AD&D game is to structure battles between a force of good units, controlled by a coalition of PCs, and the "forces of evil" run by, of course, the DM. When constructing encounters and adventures such as this, give serious thought to having one or two extra players help you run the bad guys. This greatly speeds play, and you will find yourself having a lot more fun than if you try to run an entire army alone against a collection of PCs running an army of equal size.

If you enjoy fighting mass-combat encounters, they don't have to be tied directly in to the fate of your PCs. Perhaps you'll want to set up a BATTLESYSTEM engagement that occurs "offstage" in your campaign world. With no PCs present and thus no players having a great emotional stake in the battle, you can simply divide the players (yourself included) into a couple of teams — and have at it!

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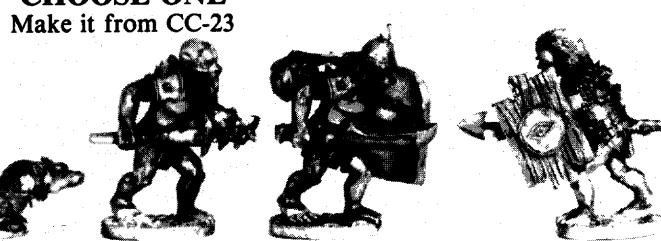
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# From first draft to last gasp

## . . . Wherein the editor gets the final word

by Michael Dobson

The idea of doing a new set of miniatures rules for the AD&D system had been around for a while, but the project (originally called "Bloodstone Pass") had been on and off the schedule. This phenomenon is not that unusual, since there are always a lot more great ideas than there is time to get them done.

Finally, the project was placed back on the schedule, and assigned to Doug Niles (the designer) and myself (the editor). Doug had created the Knight Hawks game for the STAR FRONTIERS® system, and I had been the editor of the DRAGONLANCE™ module series. We started meeting on the "Bloodstone Pass" project in March 1984, almost a year before the game would reach the market.

When TSR staff members create a new game, module, or accessory, the first thing that happens is a series of meetings to create a concept and a plan. Harold Johnson, TSR's Director of Design, helped create the concept and approve the ideas that Doug and I were proposing. Early in this process, the design team realized that this project had a great deal of untapped potential. Although several previous AD&D miniatures rules sets existed (going all the way back to the venerable *Chainmail* game, where it all started), none of them were up to date with the full, current AD&D system. The new game would have to include all new magic spells, new character classes, and every monster in the entire system!

But something else — something more important — came out of those early meetings: "Bloodstone Pass" was going to be an AD&D game expansion first, and a miniatures game second. The design team felt that it was more important to have a game that kept the flavor and structure of the entire AD&D game universe than to be a traditional miniatures game. From there, it was decided to use cardboard counters as an option, and to add 3-D ADVENTURE FOLD-UP™ figures for additional gaming excitement.

That decision had many more consequences that became evident as the design phase began. Early on, the design team decided that the name "Bloodstone Pass" didn't convey a feeling of what the game was all about. After much discussion, the name was changed to the Official ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® BATTLESYSTEM Fantasy Combat Supplement. The "Bloodstone Pass" name was freed up for other uses.

The management of TSR was very ex-

cited by the new game, and gave the project its utmost support. Dennis Kauth, Dave Sutherland, and Bob Maurus, of TSR's 3-D Products Division, started coming up with literally hundreds of ideas for cardboard figures and miniatures that could be used with the game. Dave "Zeb" Cook, Bruce Nesmith, and many other designers contributed ideas.

Doug Niles created the first draft of the rules, and then playtesting began. The main conference room turned into a miniatures battlefield for weeks on end. After the first draft had been thoroughly tested, I edited the rules, putting in all the changes that had resulted from the playtests. Then, the second draft got playtested, and a third draft was required . . . and a fourth draft . . . and a fifth draft.

With each draft, the rules became better, tighter . . . and longer. Every day, it seemed, people were thinking up new and better uses for the game.

Finally, we held the ultimate playtest — eight people each designed their own armies, using the recently developed "Creating Armies" rules. The TSR designers are a sneaky, underhanded bunch, and they all pored through the manuals trying to create the nastiest, most powerful, most outrageous armies they could find. The final battle took place on three planes (Ethereal, Astral, and Prime Material) with about 40% of the total forces invisible when the game began. There were devas, planetars, mezzodaemons, galeb duhr, and 10,000 gibberlings — each with a sword and a *girdle of storm giant strength*. There were catapults firing *mirrors of life trapping* that contained powerful monsters. There was a force of 220 invisible shadow dragons. There were three hundred-handed giants (*see the Legends and Lore* volume for details). There were drow cavalry on nightmares (they didn't last long). It took 8 hours of playing time (and 4 large deep-dish pizzas) to get through two turns . . . but it was an incredible amount of fun, and a lot was learned.

That led to the sixth draft . . . and eventually to the seventh.

The final edited rules were turned over to TSR's graphics department in December, and John Meyers began work on graphic design and presentation for the various booklets, boxes, counters, ADVENTURE FOLD-UP figures, and forms that went into the game. With our release date looming near, everyone was in high gear down to the day it all went to the printers.

Doug and I, meanwhile, had persuaded TSR to use the old "Bloodstone Pass" name for the first BATTLESYSTEM game accessory — H-1, *Bloodstone Pass*. Because nothing related to the BATTLESYSTEM project was done halfway, *Bloodstone Pass* became a "supermodule," with more counters, roster booklets, adventures, and an entire 3-D village using ADVENTURE FOLD-UP figures. *Bloodstone Pass* is scheduled for release in July.

Tracy Hickman, creator of the DRAGONLANCE® series and an incredibly prolific and talented game designer, decided to bring the BATTLESYSTEM game into the DRAGONLANCE campaign world. The results appear in DL-8, *Dragons of War*, also a July release. In DL-8, the heroes of the saga command a small army in the defense of a key pass. Not to be outdone, Doug Niles has created a huge aerial battle for DL-9, *Dragons of Deceit* — in which the DRAGONLANCE heroes ride good dragons into combat!

There are other projects that will use the BATTLESYSTEM rules. I am designing X-10, *Red Arrow, Black Shield*, a D&D® Expert Set module, for November release. This adventure uses both the "War Machine" rules from the D&D Companion Set and the BATTLESYSTEM rules adapted for the D&D game. Other designers are thinking about what they can do with mass battles, so in the coming months, you should see quite a few adventures for these new rules. If you're going to attend the GEN CON® 18 Convention this year, be sure to see the BATTLESYSTEM Supplement demonstrations.

### Using the BATTLESYSTEM game

If you're a fantasy miniatures buff, of course, you'll want the game right away, since you can set up and run neat fantasy miniatures battles with it. But what if you're not particularly interested in a miniatures game?

The BATTLESYSTEM game is a lot more than just a set of miniatures rules, and there's a lot that can be done with it even if you don't care about miniatures gaming. For one thing, you don't have to invest in a large collection of figures to use it, although painted miniatures make for a very attractive battle scene. The cardboard counters included with the game work just as well (and also work in an ordinary AD&D or D&D game), and they look pretty impressive themselves when arrayed on a tabletop.

The most obvious thing you can do is to

run melees that are a lot larger than what you could run previously. Want to have 200 orcs attack your PC party and still finish the playing session by ten o'clock? No problem. In BATTLESYSTEM game scale, there are only 20 counters to be maneuvered, and a single dice roll can take care of 200 separate attacks.

At higher levels, most PCs accumulate henchmen and hirelings. When they are well played, henchmen and hirelings add a great deal to the life and excitement of the game, but they complicate things for the DM. When they are poorly played, henchmen and hirelings just clutter up the board. If you use the BATTLESYSTEM rules, you can handle a much larger number of hirelings in combat. If your players decide to hire a couple of hundred mercenaries to help clean out the local dungeon, you're all ready for them.

With the BATTLESYSTEM Supplement, PCs can enter military service or become mercenaries. This can open up entire new vistas in a campaign. Low-level PCs can work their way up through the ranks, earning experience points and seeing the world. If the PCs earn enough money, they can even recruit their own mercenary forces and hire themselves out to the rulers of your campaign world. This is a good vehicle for getting your characters involved with the political and military situations in the campaign.

Wars shaped the history of the ancient

and medieval worlds. The AD&D game campaign worlds, such as the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Game Setting and the world of Krynn from the DRAGONLANCE series, also are concerned with wars. Whether you're using a TSR-designed world or a campaign world of your own devising, consider how the ambitions of rulers, enmity between nations, and other circumstances can lead to big wars. With the BATTLESYSTEM Supplement, you can get your PCs involved in the wars, and so participate in the shaping of history.

If you're playing a D&D game campaign, don't forget the "War Machine" rules in the D&D Companion Set. It's not necessary to fight out every single battle using the full-scale BATTLESYSTEM rules. You only have to create those battles that actually involve the PCs. (The upcoming module *Red Arrow, Black Shield* uses both "War Machine" and BATTLESYSTEM rules, and has useful tips for how to integrate both sets of rules into your campaign.)

D&D game characters who have acquired dominions (also described in the Companion Set) can use BATTLESYSTEM rules as well as "War Machine" rules to fight battles that involve their dominions. Wars of conquest, wars of defense, wars of revenge — they're all possible.

The BATTLESYSTEM rules lead to a wide variety of potential scenarios. Here are a few ideas.

Your characters are exploring a dungeon, but find out that the territory around the dungeon is embroiled in a huge battle. The characters can get involved on one side or another, or they can just try to escape the battlefield without getting killed.

After a few too many drinks at the local tavern, the characters awaken the next morning to find that they've been press-ganged into the local army and that they are expected to march out onto the battlefield and fight in the defense of some local baron they've never even heard of. And, just in case they get any ideas, the penalty for desertion is death by hanging.

The characters are commanding a small elite unit heading for the wars, but they have to cross hostile territory. They are pinned down in a small, abandoned fort by several thousand goblins, and they have to fight for their lives against an overwhelmingly numerous force (also known as the "Zulu" scenario).

The characters are again commanding a small elite unit. This time, they have to defend a narrow pass against a huge enemy army, or their kingdom will collapse (also known as the "Thermopylae" scenario).

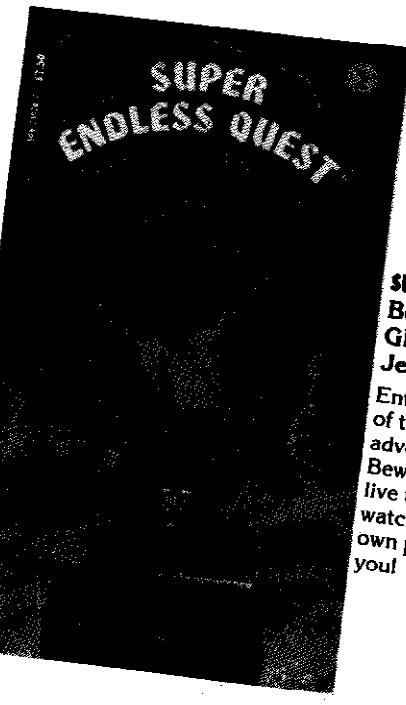
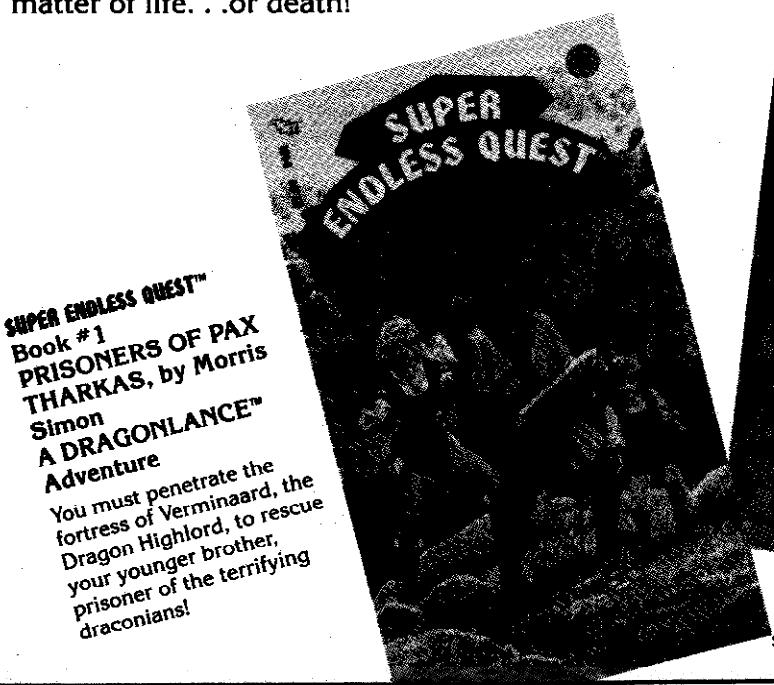
A small band of freedom fighters (the PCs) must recruit peasants and form them into an army to attack the evil usurper in his impregnable castle (the "Robin Hood" scenario).

A strange invading army from the Outer Planes is menacing the Prime Material

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Plane. The invaders can be modrons, githyanki, hordlings, or even slaadi. Because of the opposition's alien nature, special powers, and inhuman desires, the PCs must develop new strategies to overcome the threat.

Similarly, the invaders can come from deep within the earth (drow or kuo-toa), from beneath the sea (sahuagin invading a coastal town), or from strange corners of the world (norkers, xvarts).

The Emperor has decided to expand his realm to include the barbarian tribes that occupy the northern wastes. An army is assigned to conquer the tribes and bring them into the empire (the "Julius Caesar in Gaul" scenario). The PCs can either be leaders in the Imperial Army, or they can be war chiefs of the barbarian tribes, trying to resist the inexorable might of the empire. This scenario emphasizes guerrilla action, small-unit raids, ambushes, etc.

A time warp catapults an AD&D or D&D army into Nazi Germany. This scenario was originally created by Gary Gygax in an article titled "Sturmgeschutz and Sorcery — or, How effective is a panzerfaust against a troll, Heinz?" (reprinted in *The Best of DRAGON® Magazine, Volume 1*). You can use the scenario presented in that article, or create your own version.

Similarly, AD&D or D&D armies can be transported into the universe of another role-playing game. The *Dungeon Masters Guide* provides guidelines for translating the AD&D system into the GAMMA WORLD® and BOOT HILL® universes. You can also pit an AD&D army against a STAR FRONTIERS army, or perhaps even some characters from the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game.

If the player characters in your campaign have acquired dominions of their own, you can promote strife between them, and let your PCs fight each other in a series of wars. To do that, you have to control dominion income and troop costs to make sure that each player character builds only reasonable armies.

You can create a campaign environment similar to the Old West, with orcs, barbarians, or berserkers as the "Indians." This can lead to supply-train or wagon-train

raids, caravan-guard battles, and literally hundreds of other engagements.

You can adapt great battles from any period of history to an AD&D or D&D game equivalent. For example, D-Day can inspire an amphibious assault on an island controlled by a powerful wizard. The Trojan Horse can be the foundation of an exciting adventure in which a small force enters an enemy city and fights from within. The Battle of Britain can lead to a huge aerial campaign involving dragons, pegasi, and other strange flying creatures.

We've found that the BATTLESYSTEM Supplement is particularly easy to design

scenarios for. An hour or two of creative effort can easily produce a scenario that is good for ten hours or more of playing. You have to create a situation that leads to a battle, create the terrain, construct the units and prepare the Army Roster Sheets, and lay out the tabletop. Then it's time to play!

The release of the BATTLESYSTEM Supplement, the new *Unearthed Arcana* book, the D&D Masters Set, and the AD&D *Oriental Adventures* book later this year makes 1985 a milestone year for both the AD&D and D&D games. Don't be left out as fantasy role-playing reaches new heights!

"nitty gritty" rules, or do they just "guesstimate" a lot?" In answer to Mr. Dornbierer's question, let me say the following. Every DM I've ever known, myself included, has changed something in the "official" AD&D rules to meet with his particular tastes.

I agree with Mr. Paul F. Culotta (we are not related, to my knowledge) when he said in his letter to the Forum (issue #98), "It is absolutely true that several of the 'official rules' are too unrealistic, unplayable, cumbersome, or, worst of all, not fun." Such "rules" as weapon speed factors and weapons' AC adjustments just slow down and complicate a game that should be relatively fast-paced. No DM I've ever known has used these in his campaign, and I seriously doubt that most do.

On the other hand, some very "reasonable" rules are often ignored. Such things as encumbrance and weapons restrictions for short characters add a touch of realism to the AD&D game. (I know many feel that realism has no place in a fantasy game, but I feel that it does.) For example, I took part in a campaign in which a halfling thief was armed with a large trident. Sure, I'll change a few things here and there, if I feel it's a must, but that is going overboard! Needless to say, I was slightly annoyed at the "breaking" of what seems to be a perfectly logical "rule," but because I was not the Dungeon Master, I said nothing about it.

Many articles in DRAGON Magazine are great for AD&D play, and it seems idiotic to me that someone couldn't use one because one man hasn't declared it an "official rule." Some of these articles include the Creature Catalogs and Treasure Troves, as well as the "Pages from the Mages" and "Ecology" series. These, along with many other articles, have been priceless in aiding my campaign.

Many new character classes have been added to the AD&D game. On occasion, I have heard of a player who could not belong to one of these new classes because his DM didn't believe in using "unofficial" material. I myself have used classes from the pages of DRAGON Magazine (though altered slightly to fit into my campaign), and my players think they're great, even though they weren't official.

To be sure, I'm not saying that I disagree with everything Mr. Gygax says is official. He is indeed the "founding force" of the AD&D game, and without him we would most likely not have it. Yet, he is still a man, and no one man has ALL the great ideas. I don't wish to sound insulting, and I hope I'm not, because I have great respect for Mr. Gygax. I'm only trying to make a point: Something doesn't have to be official to be fun.

Chad P. Culotta  
Shreveport, La.



(From page 10)

quantity and quality of playing, they would probably still be gaming.

This brings me to stage four, the "book player." I read all my issues of DRAGON Magazine over again, read my incoming ones from my subscription, and looked over my books. I hadn't played in several months. Finally, I decided to do something about it and called up most of the people I knew who played the D&D game. Virtually all of them were in the same situation I was in. After some organization and many long phone calls, we decided to form an AD&D group.

Although we won't be playing an "official" campaign, meaning we'll be using some of the changes suggested in DRAGON Magazine and some of our own, but there will be no critical-hits tables or spell-point systems or other such variants. The mere thought of DMing without having 3rd-level fighters using +5 plate mail gives me ecstasy.

To wrap it up, I would like to know just how many people out there have gone through any of these stages. I may be wrong, but I bet some of the people reading this letter haven't role-played in six months.

Brian McCaskill  
Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.

\* \* \* \*

In issue #96, a letter by Mr. Joseph Dornbierer was printed in the Forum section of your magazine. Since then, several people have given their answer to his question: "Do people really use the



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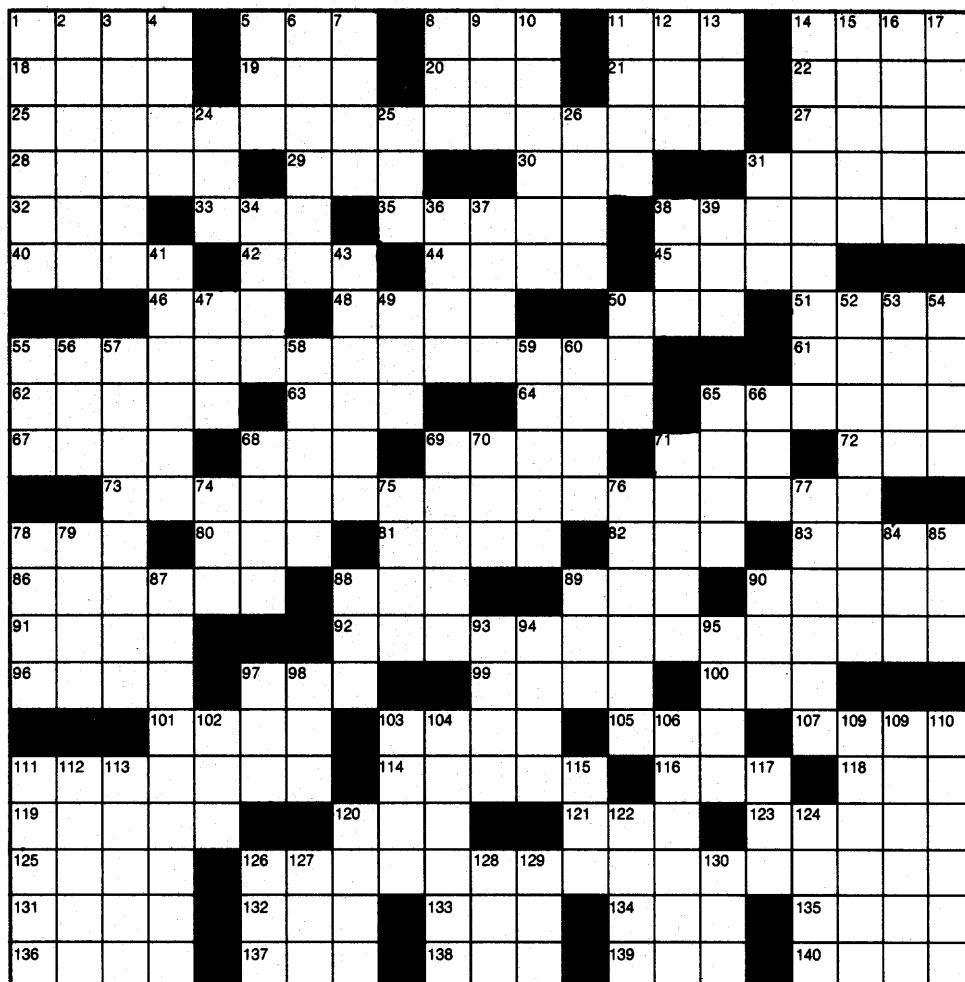
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# COMPRESSOR

by Michael D. Selinker

## ACROSS

- Investigator's alternative to Fortune
5. 1977 Richard Harris film
8. Smile former
11. Non-profit network
14. Credit-earning report card marks
18. Night \_ (any time)
19. A preservative
20. Babylonian god
21. Kanga's kid
22. \_-kiri
23. Thinker androids' cohorts
27. Two-headed humanoid
28. Word for a cuss
29. Number of a certain conjunction in the clues
30. Elemental suffix
31. Realtor's sign words
32. Coral or North
33. Norse healing goddess
35. Gorge
38. Wall \_
40. Laverne DeFazio's stepmom
42. 1/SIN, in math
44. See 59-Down
45. Apollo's creators
46. Vowelless word
48. Pork fat
50. Dawn
51. Auditors
55. *Walled City*, e.g.
61. Pearl Harbor's locale
62. In port
63. Member of the hound folk (GW)
64. Shape of 98-Down
65. "\_ol" man!"
67. Unsavory smelling beast
68. "What Kind of Fool\_?"
69. Pore over
71. Possess
72. Weapon of the Dwarvish Lords
73. Druid spell
78. Cupid
80. Gormandize
81. Identify
82. Summer at Normandy
83. Gave \_ performance (fell short)
86. Author
88. Baby's word of disgust
89. Point on a rose
90. Sidestep
91. ". . . not\_? When it is..."
92. Acererak's abode
96. Davenport
97. The Doctor's apprentice
99. Elephantine creature
100. Journal or legal suffix
101. Mephit form
103. Punch-line word for 91 -Across clue
105. \_:ITL
107. European capital, to natives
111. Former prestidigitator
114. "So\_good"
116. Spoken
118. Negatory: prefix
119. \_ of thousands



120. *Cosmic Encounter Corp.*
121. Morass
123. 43-Down's forte
125. Tenser's floater
126. Force weapon
131. Financier John Jacob
132. AD&D® game creator's initials
133. Weed or moray
134. Sumerian god
135. \_ resemblance to (looked like)
136. Whom the bells toll for
137. Coloration
138. Pollution regulating org.
139. Concorde, e.g.
140. Vortex
13. Morse distress call
14. Miocene bird
15. Colorlessness
16. Spruce up
17. Alternative to shorts
24. "John Barleycorn"
25. What Bugs calls Porky
26. Report
31. Worth and Leavenworth: abbr.
34. Orcus's or Demogorgon's blood
36. Evil 43-Down's spell
37. Fervor
38. \_ about (approximately)
39. Spectator
41. Country near northern Spain
43. Deity worshiper
47. Forefoot digit
49. TOP SECRET® talent: abbr.
50. See 19-Across
52. Return on face value
53. Put \_ on (curse)
54. Arrid's competitor
55. Corn's relative
56. New York's location
57. \_ Change
58. Run the \_
59. With 44-Across, expensive protection
60. Glorify one's valor
65. Gave one's word

## DOWN

- " . . . better and \_"
- Decorated
- \_ effort (work)
- Beholder
- Dragonkind items
- The Throne of the Gods, et al.
- \_ time (never)
- Attorney's field
- "Time \_ Bottle" (Jim Croce)
- What GAMMA WORLD® Knights practice
- Straightlaced
- Half-orc, to 132-Across

66. In accord  
 68. Alda or Arkin  
 69. Constrictor, e.g.  
 70. Car part  
 71. *A Tale\_Cities*  
 74. Meadow  
 75. Ten feet, gamewise  
 76. Words before a question  
 77. Slow eater  
 78. *The Lords of Chaos and Morningstar*  
 79. "Love\_" (The Beatles)  
 84. Fetor  
 85. Unworked metals  
 87. Loyalty factor

88. "Believe \_ not!"  
 89. Liquid level line: abbr.  
 90. Questioning words  
 93. Kind of ski lift  
 94. Drakkar's propulsion  
 95. Greek cheese  
 97. "\_ Got a Secret"  
 98. Lengthy fish  
 102. Morrissey's forte  
 103. \_to be reckoned with  
 104. Genie race  
 106. Reacts to a second-level spell  
 108. "Can you make \_ out of the letters in NEW DOOR?"  
 109. Used a thoroughfare

110. "\_ Now" (Smokey Robinson)  
 111. Gossett role  
 112. Humanoid language  
 113. Social stratum  
 115. \_ Wan Kenobi  
 117. Records  
 120. Border on a corner  
 122. Stone of weight, e.g.  
 124. "... have to do \_ yourself"  
 126. Exclusive club  
 127. Lupercalian event  
 128. \_ plant (GW creature)  
 129. Pie \_ mode  
 130. Hickory or acorn

(Answers on page 106)

## The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address, plus your gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested:

AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU® game; DQ= DRAGONQUEST™ game;

GW = GAMMA WORLD® game;  
 MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROESTM game; SF = STAR FRONTIERS® game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; T = TRAVELLER® game; RQ= RUNEQUEST® game; R = RINGWORLD™ game; ST = STAR TREK": The Role-Playing Game. For space considerations, only the first three preferences given can be printed.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who live outside the continental United States and Canada, in areas where nearby gamers are

small in number or non-existent, as a way for them to contact other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine; to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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# Convention Calendar

## GAME-FEST VI, Aug. 9-18

San Diego's 6th annual game festival will be held in the Old Town district, and it will feature over 60 different gaming events with more than \$1500 in total prizes. This convention will also include special game demonstrations and instruction sessions, figure painting, diorama design, and costume contests. Registration fees, which include a \$20 coupon book for game purchases, for all 10 days are \$15 until August 8, and \$20 at the door. For more details, contact: Game-Fest VI, c/o Game Towne, 3954 Harney St. (Old Town), San Diego CA 92110.

## VALLEYCON '85, Aug. 17

This science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Tulare Community Center in Tulare, Cal. Films, trivia and costume contests, and open gaming are among the scheduled events. Admission to this convention is free. For information, contact: Valleycon, c/o Big Mikes Video, 1766 E. Tulare Ave., Tulare CA 93274.

## GEN CON® 18 GAME CONVENTION, Aug. 22-25

This gaming convention will be staged at the MECCA Convention Hall in Milwaukee, Wis. For more details about this event, contact: The GEN CON® Convention Office, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, or telephone (414)248-3625.

## MEMPHIS FANTASY CONVENTION, Aug. 23-25

This benefit convention will take place at the Rodeway Inn West in Memphis, Tenn. All proceeds will be donated to St. Jude's Children's Hospital. The convention will feature an RPGA™ Network AD&D™ tournament, plus many other games. Contact: MFCA, 3336 Scenic Terrace, Memphis TN 38128, or telephone (901)454-5098.

## TERRA-CON '85, Aug. 23-25

This convention will be held at the Hilton Inn East in Wichita, Kan. Guests of honor include Poul and Karen Anderson and David Le Anderson. Registration fees are \$10. For more details, contact: Terra-Con '85, P.O. Box 947, Wichita KS 67201.

## TRIANGULUM, Aug. 30 - Sep. 1

This convention will be staged at the Marc Plaza Hotel in Milwaukee, Wis. Guests of honor will include Harlan Ellison and David Gerrold; Isaac Asimov will be guest speaker (via teleconference). Activities will include gaming, films, a masquerade, a writing workshop, and a trivia contest. A Saturday

morning brunch is planned; cost will be \$9. Registration fees are \$29. For more information, contact: Triangulum, P.O. Box 92456, Milwaukee WI 53202.

## GATEWAY '85, Aug. 31- Sep. 2

This convention will be staged at the Airport Hyatt Hotel in Los Angeles, Cal. Role-playing games, family games, seminars, and a game auction will be featured. For more information, contact: Gateway '85, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

## FANTASY FAIRE, Aug. 31- Sep. 2

This annual convention will feature films, panels, filksinging, workshops, a costume contest, and a cabaret/talent show. Guests of honor include science-fiction writers Poul Anderson, Fritz Leiber, Evangeline Walton, and Paul Edwin Zimmer. Registration fees \$25. For more details, contact: Fantasy Publishing Company, 1855 West Main St., Alhambra CA 91801.

## AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS, Sep. 7

This convention will take place at the Holiday Inn North Bluegrass Pavillion in Lexington, Ky. Featured activities will include role-playing and board games, tournaments, and miniatures events. Registration fees are \$5. For more information about this convention, contact: Tim Wisner, c/o The Rusty Scabbard, 513 E. Maxwell St., Lexington KY 40502.

## COGACON '85, Sep. 20-22

This gaming convention is sponsored by the Central Ohio Gamers Association, and it will be staged at the Airport Quality Inn in Columbus, Ohio. A variety of role-playing, board, and miniatures games will be offered. Registration fees are \$5. For more details, contact: Paul T. Riegel, c/o War Game Designs, P.O. Box 124, Hilliard OH 43026.

## EARTHCON V, Sep. 20-22

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Cleveland Hilton South. Guests of honor will include David Smith, Ted Rypel, and Tony Isabella. Featured activities include a dealer's room, an art show and auction, a masquerade, and videos. For more information, contact: Earthcon V, P.O. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

## 1985 COI/COD FALL MANEUVERS, Sep. 21-22

For more details about this wargaming convention, contact: Bill Thomson, 7081 NW 16th St., Apt. 114, Plantation FL 33313, or telephone (305)587-3315.

## VALLEY CON 10, Sep. 21-22

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Fargo, N.D. Guest of honor will be fantasy author Patricia Wrede. Featured activities will include videos, an art show and auction, panels, a Tarot reader, and a wide variety of gaming events. Registration fees are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under the age of 13. For additional information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Valley Con 10, P.O. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58111.

## NOWSCON '85, Sep. 28-29

Sponsored by the Northern Ohio Wargaming Society, this convention will take place at the National Guard Armory in Brookpark, Ohio. The convention will feature an official RPGA™ Network-sanctioned AD&D™ tournament, and the winner will be awarded the coveted Golden Pegasus trophy. For more information, contact: NOWS, P.O. Box 29116, Parma OH 44129.

## TOL-CON III, Sep. 28-29

This gaming convention will be staged at the Ramada Inn Southwyck in Toledo, Ohio. For more details, contact: Tol-Con III, c/o Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Rd., Toledo OH 43615, or telephone (419)531-5540.

## CRUSADER CON V, Oct. 4-6

This gaming convention will take place at the Metropolitan State College in Denver, Col. Tournament events will include Diplomacy™, Kingmaker™, Champions™, Squad Leader™, and AD&D® games, and much, much more. Registration fees are \$8 until September 15, and \$10 thereafter. For more details about this event, contact: The Auraria Gamer's Club, P.O. Box 13395, Denver CO 80201-3395.

## MAINECON, Oct. 10-12

This convention will be held at the Waynflete school in Portland, Maine. Events include fantasy role-playing games, miniatures, board games, and seminars. On-site dormitory space available at reasonable cost; however, bring your own bedding. For more details, contact: The Maine Wargamers Association, 116 Front St. Bath ME 04530.

## COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS XI, Oct. 11-13

This gaming event will take place at the Union College in Schenectady, New York. Featured activities will include costume and miniatures contests, an auction, and around-the-clock gaming. Contact: Pamela Boynton, Council, P.O. Box 4086, Queensbury NY 12801.

## WINGAMES VI, Oct. 11-13

Held at the University of Manitoba, this event offers one of the largest AD&D® tournaments in Canada. Free admission; an entry fee may be required for some events. Contact: Wingames VI, Box 80 University Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2N2.



# Gamers' Guide

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## Letters

(From page 4)

sure we'd make enough money on the effort to make it worth doing, from a business standpoint. Someday, maybe, we'll give it a try, and maybe we'll find out that we had nothing to worry about in the first place. In the meantime you'll have to be content, just as we are, with seeing your favorite paintings on the cover of your favorite magazine.

### How do you decide what goes into a Best of DRAGON anthology?

In each of the three BOD's I've been involved with producing, the first and foremost consideration has been reader desire — we reprint what you want to see, not necessarily what we think are the "best" articles we've done. The decisions aren't based on how many people write to say they like an article when it's printed (although we do enjoy the kind words); instead, they're based on requests from people who want us to reprint an article from an issue they don't have, or from people who say, "Why don't you do an article on so-and-so?" — when "so-and-so" happens to be a subject we covered in an old issue.

One of the incidental advantages of an anthology is being able to produce a group of related stories in a package, so that you don't have to leaf through a pile of magazines to get all the information you want. That was one of the motivations behind our reprinting of Roger Moore's excellent "Point of View" series in the Best of DRAGON anthology, Vol. III.

And sometimes we like to give you a look at the way things were, a sampling of the sorts of subjects that were filling up the magazine before most of you even knew it existed. That was part of the reason for the collection of articles by Gary Gygax that graced the pages of Vol. II — the thoughts of the man who started it all, dating back to a time when dice was something you did with vegetables and AC was a term referring to electricity.

### How does a letter get selected to be published in the Letters column?

Any letter that contains what we consider to be a legitimate question about an article, or an observation about some aspect of the magazine, goes into a special "Letters" file. Once a month, just before the deadline for the upcoming issue,

we sort through what's there and pick enough letters to fill the space we have available. We can never guarantee that a particular question will be answered in print, or that a certain person's letter will be printed, but your chances of having your letter published will be enhanced if at least one of the following things is true:

— Your question or observation is phrased in a civil, reasonable tone. We do use inflammatory, caustic, or downright insulting letters once in a great while, but only (heh, heh) when it serves our purpose to do so.

— Your question or observation, if it's a specific one, pertains to a magazine that's no more than four months old when letter-picking time comes around. (For instance, if we had used a regular Letters column in this issue, the general cutoff point for questions and criticisms would have been issue #96.) This keeps the column from getting too "stale" and gets questions answered and issues resolved at a time when the magazine feature that spawned the question is still fresh in people's minds.

Your question is one that was asked by a fair number of people. (That way, we can be reasonably sure that your concern was shared by a good portion of the readership.) In such a case, we try to use the letter from the person who got the question to us first; promptness counts, even if the answer to your question doesn't show up for three or four months after you sent it in.

We don't print a letter as a special favor to someone. (That's directed at the dozen or so of you who have written in the last few months to say, "Please print this, because I have a bet with my friends that I can get a letter published.") And we don't take dares, such as "I dare you to have the guts to print this." That's the nice thing about having guts: When you've got 'em, you don't have to flaunt 'em.

### How does a letter get selected to be published in the Forum column?

Two of the general guidelines in the previous answer apply to Forum letters as well as Letters letters. We don't look kindly upon insults, slander, or letters that criticize a writer instead of what that writer said. And your chances of getting into print are better if your topic is relatively timely; don't wait three or four months to send in your reaction to a Forum letter, or you run the risk of buying your ticket after the train has left the station.

As befits its name, the Forum column is a place for two kinds of letters: those that raise new issues and ideas, and those that respond to, rebut, or

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support a letter that was published in an earlier issue. We like to keep a discussion on a certain topic alive for a while — not to fan the flames of controversy, but to give people a chance to get their two gp's worth in. At the same time, we try not to beat an issue into the ground and we try not to publish two letters that say essentially the same thing, no matter how differently the thoughts are expressed. (If you see a letter that sounds like your opinion translated into someone else's words, you can safely assume that your letter isn't going to make it in.)

At least once every two or three issues, we try to include a letter that introduces a new topic for continued discussion. If part of your motivation for writing a Forum letter is to see it in print (and it should be), then you might do well to break some new ground or dash off a response to a topic that has just been introduced. The longer you wait, or the older your topic is, the greater the chance that your letter, after being read, will become a permanent resident of the "Old Forum" file.

#### Do you read every letter you get?

Yes. Absolutely every one. All the way through. Sometimes more than once.

If you can't be sure of anything else, you can be sure of this: If your letter gets delivered, it gets read — and kept. We can only print a small fraction of all the letters we receive, but every one we read has some amount of influence on how we do what we do. (If you could hear the number of times I start a sentence with "We get a lot of letters from people who . . ." then you'd know what I mean.)

Every one of you who has written, or will write, deserves credit — not only for making the effort to send a letter, but for making that effort

in the face of overwhelming odds against that letter being published. For as long as I've been in control of deciding what we print, we have had a policy of not publishing letters that are written solely for the purpose of complimenting the magazine and its contributors. (When you spend a lot of time patting yourself on the back, the best you can hope for is a sore arm.) But, over the years, that hasn't stopped hundreds of you from dropping us short notes — and long ones — to make sure that we know you appreciate the product we put out. If you got letters like the ones we get, you'd read 'em all, too.

#### How do you decide what articles to put in each issue?

Well, as we log in each accepted manuscript, we assign it a number. Then, when issue-planning time rolls around, we get out the dice.

But seriously, folks . . . a fair amount of thought does go into figuring out what we would like to run in each issue. The first consideration, obviously, is what we have in the "to be published" pile: Once upon a time we tried printing an article that no one had written yet, and it wasn't very exciting reading.

After assessing what's on hand, we make preliminary selections with the intention of (a) satisfying your continual demand for articles on certain games that we, and you, consider top priority — the AD&D® game and the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, to name the two most prominent examples — and (b) providing, when we can, a little bit of variety with an occasional historical piece or an article or two on lower-priority games.

With a total readership of better than 300,000 people every month, DRAGON® Magazine cannot possibly please everyone at the same time.

What we do try to do is provide the greatest good for the greatest number — and even that approach is ultimately doomed to fail. We get letters every month saying that the most recent issue was the best yet, and we get letters saying that the same issue was worse than most. Fortunately, the first group outnumbers the second — and as long as that continues to be true, we'll continue to operate the way we do.

#### Is the Roger Moore on your staff the same as Roger Moore the movie star?

Nope. Our Roger Moore once got an offer to play James Bond, but he decided to hold out for the role of Mr. Fantastic™. He's still waiting.

## Let's try that again. . . .

Some of you who have bought our BEST OF DRAGON® Vol. IV anthology may have already realized that, in addition to some pretty good articles, the book contains one of the best mistakes we've ever made.

The problem is a piece of type that was incorrectly positioned on page 50, making the top of the page pretty hard to understand. To fix it (in your mind, if not on the page), pretend the page starts with the seventh line of the right-hand column, beginning with the words "shallow turns." Then keep reading to the end of the third line under the paragraph numbered 10, to the words "any rider." Then go back to the start of the left-hand column and read everything else straight through, ignoring the bad block of type the second time you get to it.

## Crossword answer

"Compressor" would be a good puzzle to use in any issue, because it's a good puzzle. But it's especially appropriate for this issue because of the fact that's revealed by the answer to 29-Across — which also happens to be the number of the page the puzzle is printed on.



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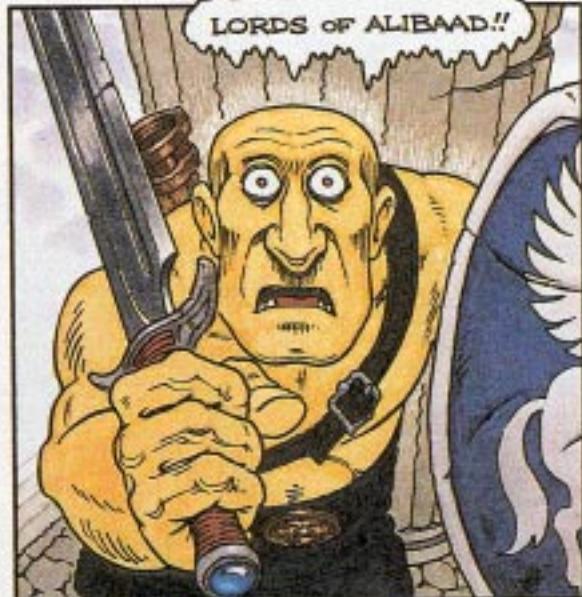
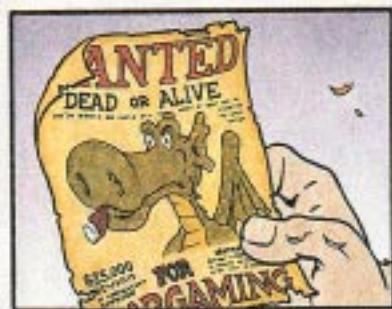
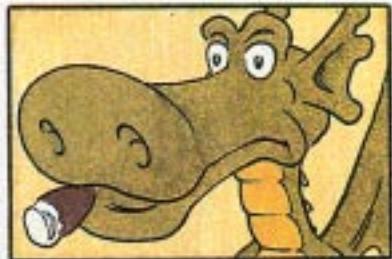
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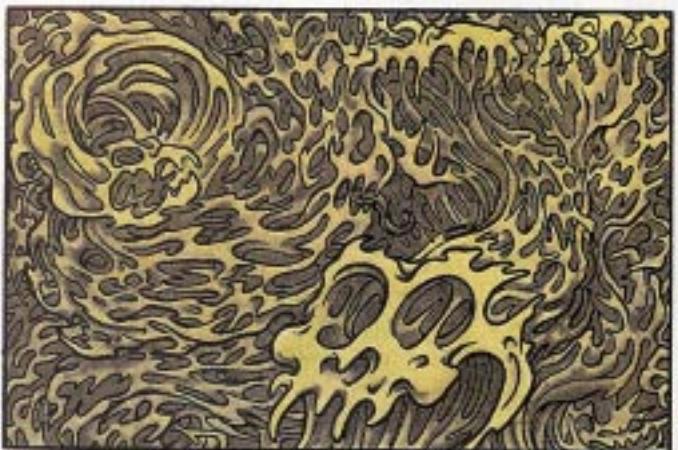
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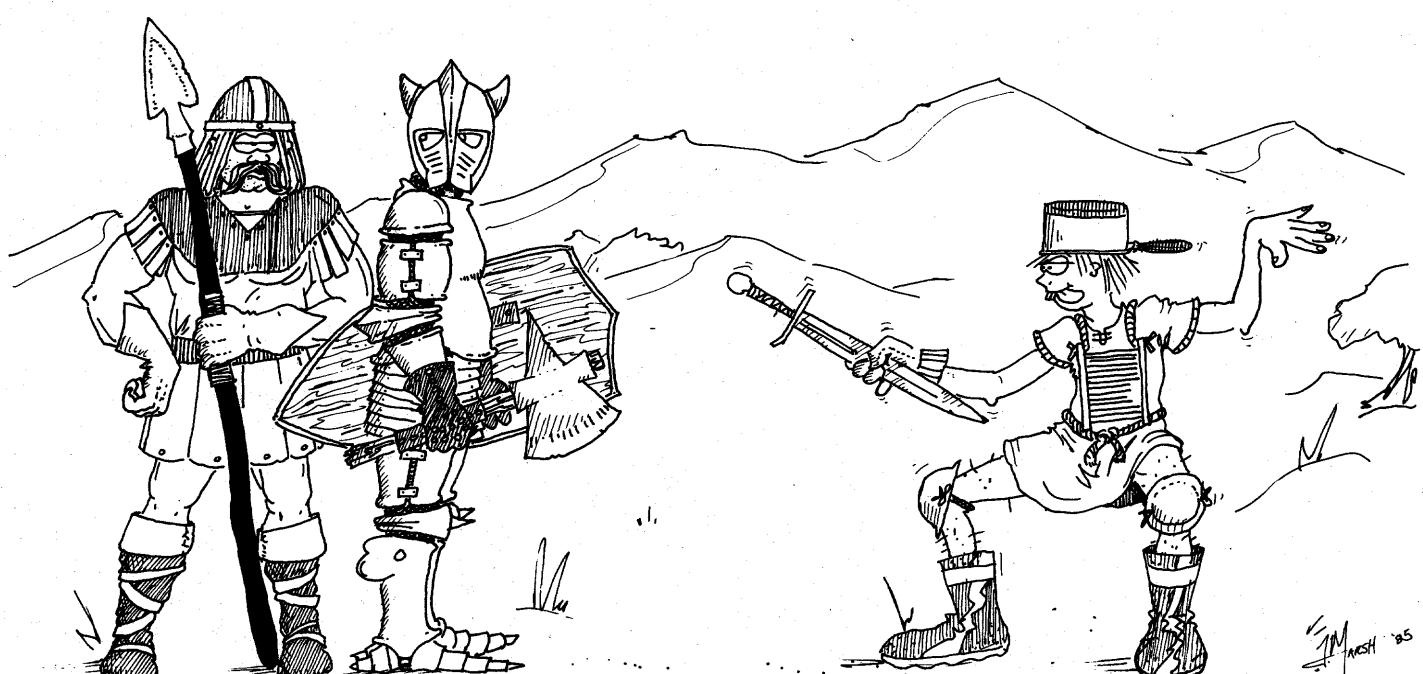
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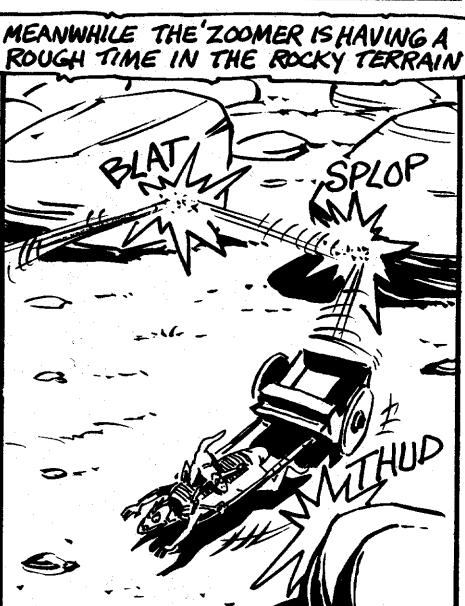
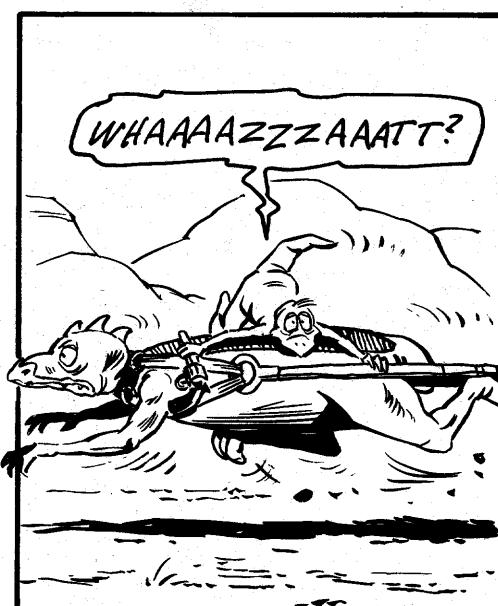
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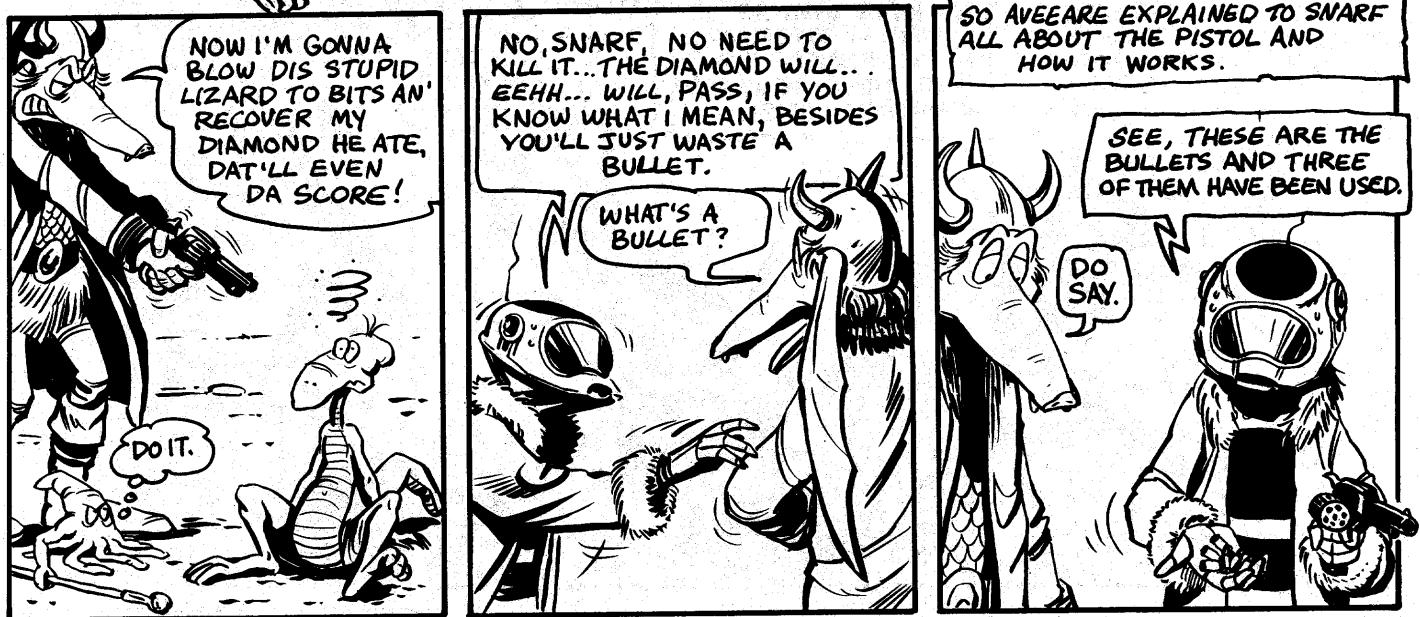
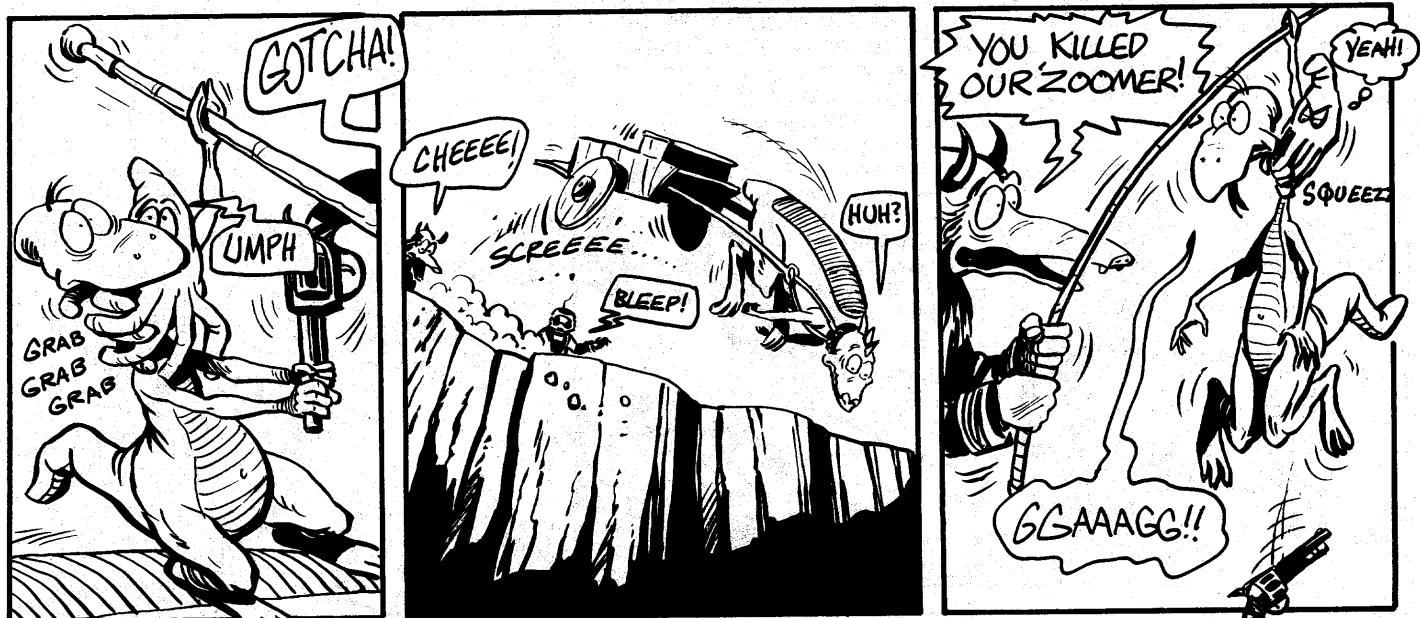
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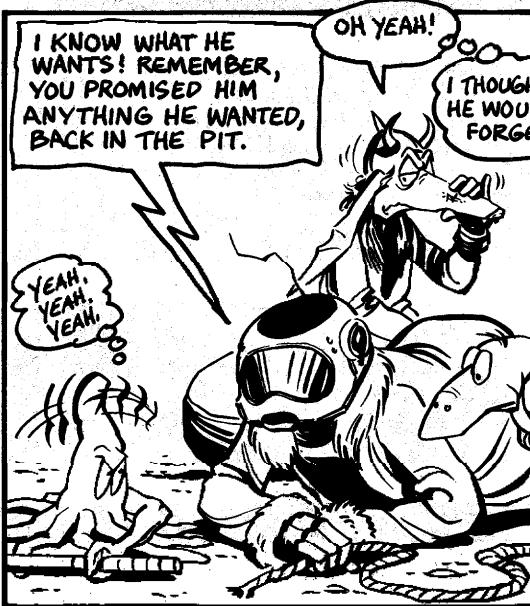
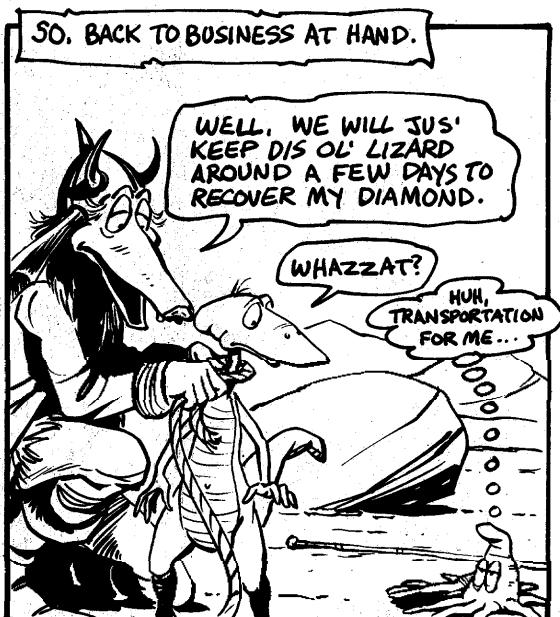
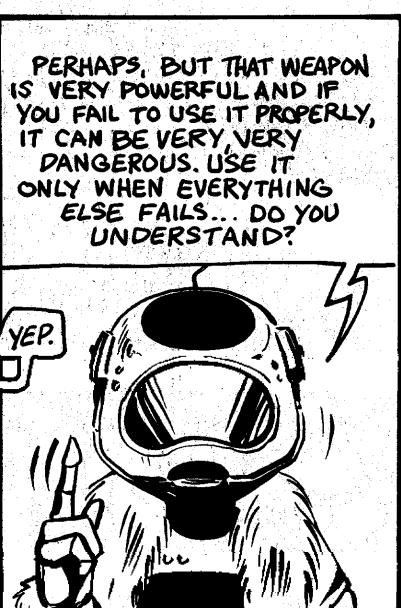
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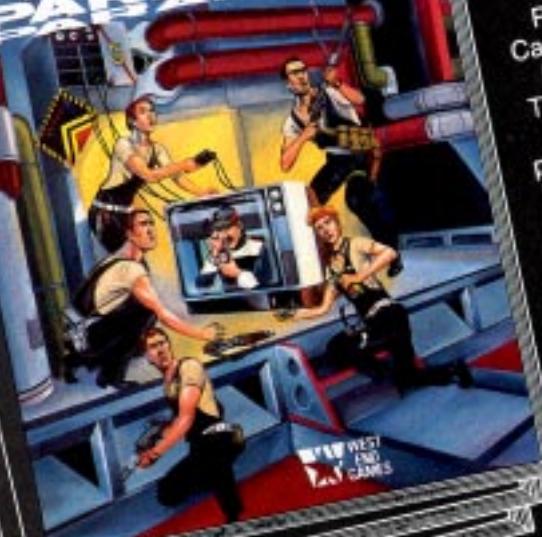
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The Computer is crazy. The Computer is happy. The Computer will help you become happy. This will drive you crazy.  
Being a citizen of Alpha Complex is fun. The Computer says so, and the Computer is your friend.  
Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?  
Being a Troubleshooter is fun. The Computer tells you so. Of course The Computer is right.  
Troubleshooters get shot at, stabbed, incinerated, stapled, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally accidentally executed. This is so much fun that many Troubleshooters go crazy. You will be working with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry lasers.  
Aren't you glad you have a laser? Won't this be fun?  
There are many traitors in Alpha Complex. Most of the happy citizens are many happy citizens. Watch out for both of them.  
The life of a Troubleshooter is full of surprises.  
Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

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